The
Prophet's Biography
May Allah exalt his Mention

سيرة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

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en@islamhouse.com

www.islamhouse.com

Pre-Prophethood
Religious Conditions

Great religions of the world had spread the light of faith, morality and learning in the ages past. However, by the sixth century AD, so completely were their scriptures and teachings distorted that had the founder or the Prophet of any one of them returned to Earth, he would unquestionably have refused his own religion and denounced its followers as apostates and idolaters.

Judaism had, by then, been reduced to an amalgam of dead rituals and sacraments without any spark of life left in it. Also, being a religion upholding a strong racial identity, it never had a message for other nations or for the good of the humanity at large.

Through mysticism and magic many polytheistic ideas and customs again found their way among the people, and the Talmud confirms the fact that idolatrous worship is seductive. The Babylonian Gemara (popular during the sixth century and often even preferred to Torah by the orthodox Jews) illustrates the state of the sixth century Jews' intellectual and religious understanding. It contains jocular and imprudent remarks about God and many absurd and outrageous beliefs and ideas, which lack not only sensibility but also inconsistency with the Jewish faith in monotheism.

Christianity had fallen prey, in its very infancy, to the misguided fervor of its overzealous evangelists, unwarranted interpretation of its tenets by ignorant church fathers and iconolatry of its gentile converts to Christianity. The doctrine of Trinity, which came to have the first claim to the Christian dogma by the close of the fourth century, has been thus described in the New Catholic Encyclopedia.

"It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, as envisioned by Roman Catholics as well as other sectors, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette. Two things have happened. There is an arrangement on the part of the exegetes and Biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel agreement on the part of the historians of the Trinitarian dogma and systematic theologians that when one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to, say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought."

Tracing the origin of pagan customs, rites, festivals and religious services of the pagans in Christianity, another historian of the Christian church gives a graphic account of the persistent endeavor of early Christians to ape the idolatrous nations. Rev. James Houston Baxter, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews writes in The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge:

"If paganism had been destroyed, it was less through annihilation than through absorption. Almost all that was pagan was carried over to survive under a Christian name. Deprived of demi-gods and heroes, men easily and half-consciously invested a local martyr with their attributes and labeled the local statue with his name, transferring to him the cult and mythology associated with the pagan deity. Before the century was over, the martyr cult was universal, and a beginning had been made of that imposition of a deified human being between God and man which, on the one hand, had been the consequence of Arianism, and was, on the other, the origin of so much that is typical of medieval piety and practice. Pagan festivals were adopted and renamed: by 400, Christmas Day, the ancient festival of the sun, was transformed into the birthday of Jesus."

By the time sixth century reared its head, the antagonism between Christians of Syria, Iraq and Egypt on the question of human and divine natures of Christ had set them at one another's throat. The conflict had virtually turned every Christian seminary, church and home into a

hostile camp, each condemning and berating the other and thirsting after its adversary's blood. Men debated with fury upon shadows or shades of belief and staked their lives on the most immaterial issues, as if these differences meant a confrontation between two antagonistic religions or nations. The Christians were, thus, neither inclined nor had time to settle matters in proper their perspective and smother the ever-increasing viciousness in the world for the salvation of humanity.

In Iran, from the earliest times, the Magi worshipped four elements (of which fire was the chief object of devotion) in the oratories or fire temples for which they had evolved a whole mass of intricate rituals and commandments. In actual practice, the popular religion included nothing save the worship of fire and adoration of Huare-Kishaeta or the Shining Sun. Certain rituals performed in a place of worship were all that their religion demanded, for, after which they are free to live as they desired. There was nothing to distinguish a Magi from an unconscientious, perfidious fellow!

Arthur Christiensen writes in *L'Iran les Sassanides*:

"**It was incumbent on the civil servants to offer prayers four times a day to the sun besides fire and water. Separate hymns were prescribed for rising and going to sleep, taking a bath, putting on the sacred cord, eating and drinking, sniffing, hair dressing, cutting of the nails, excrement and lighting the candle which were to be recited on each occasion with the greatest care. It was the**

duty of the priests to compound, purify and tend the sacred fire, which was never to be extinguished, nor water was ever allowed to touch fire. No metal was allowed to rust, for metals, too, were revered by their religion."

All prayers were performed facing the sacred fire. The last Iranian Emperor, Yazdagird III, once took an oath, saying: "I swear by the sun, which is the greatest of all gods". He had ordered those who had renounced Christianity to reenter their original faith and should publicly worship the sun in order to prove their sincerity. The principle of dualism, the two rival spirits of good and evil, had been upheld by the Iranians for such a long time that it had become a mark and symbol of their national creed. They believed that Ormuzd creates everything good, and Ahriman creates all that is bad. These two are perpetually at war and the one or the other gains the upper hand alternately. The Zoroastrian legends described by the historians of religion bear remarkable resemblance to the hierarchy of gods and goddesses and the fabulousness of Hindu and Greek mythology.

Buddhism, extending from India to Central Asia, had been converted into an idolatrous faith. Wherever the Buddhists went they took the idols (of the Buddha with them) and installed them there. Although the entire religious and cultural life of the Buddhists is overshadowed by idolatry, the students of religion have grave doubts whether Buddha was a nihilist or a believed in the existence of God. They are surprised how this

religion could at all sustain itself in the absence of any faith or conviction in the primal being.

In the sixth century A.D., Hinduism had exceeded every other religion in the number of gods and goddesses. During this period, 33 million gods were worshipped by the Hindus. The tendency to regard everything which could do harm or good as an object of personal devotion was at its height and this had given a great encouragement to stone sculpture with novel motifs of decorative ornamentation.

Describing the religious condition of India during the reign of Harsha (606-648), a little before the time when Islam made its debut in Arabia, a Hindu historian, C. V. Vaidya, writes in his History of Mediaeval Hindu India.

"Both Hinduism and Buddhism were equally idolatrous at this time. If anything, Buddhism perhaps beat the former in its intense idolatry. That religion started, indeed, with the denial of God, but concluded by making Buddha himself as the Supreme God. Later developments of Buddhism conceptualized other gods like the Bodhisatvas and the idolatry of Buddhism, especially in the Mahayana school was firmly established. It flourished in and out of India so much that the word for an idol in the Arabic has come to be Buddha itself."

C. V. Vaidya further says:

"No doubt idolatry was at this time rampant all over the world. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the world was immersed in idolatry; Christianity, Semitism, Hinduism

and Buddhism vying, so to speak, one with another in their adoration of idols." (*History of Ancient India*,Vol. I, p.101)

The Arabs had been the followers of Abrahamic religion in the olden times and had the distinction of having the first House of God in their land. But the distance of time from the great patriarchs and Prophets of yore and their isolation in the arid deserts of the peninsula had given rise to an abominable idolatry. Such adoration closely approximated to the Hindus' zeal for idol-worship in the sixth century A. D. In associating partners to God they were not behind any other polytheistic people. Having faith in the companionship of lesser gods with the Supreme Being in the direction and governance of the universe, they held the belief that their deities possessed the power to do them good or harm, or give them life or death.

Idolatry in Arabia had reached its peak, where every region and every clan or rather every house had a separate deity of its own. Three hundred and sixty idols had been installed within the Ka'ba and its courtyard - the house built by Abraham ('alaihi salaam) for the worship of the One and only God. The Arabs actually paid divine honors not merely to sculptured idols but venerated all types of stones and fetish---angels, jinn and stars were all their deities. They believed that the angels were daughters of God and the jinn His partners in divinity and thus both enjoyed supernatural powers whose mollification was essential for their well-being.

Social and Moral Conditions

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Crushed under vexatious and burdensome taxes levied by the Byzantine Empire, the allegiance to any alien ruler was considered by the populace as less oppressive than the rule of Byzantium. Insurrections and revolts had become such a common feature that in 532 A.D., the public voiced its discontent most dramatically in Constantinople by the Nika (win or conquer) revolt which took a toll of 30,000 lives. The only diversion of the chiefs and nobles was to squeeze wealth, on different pretexts, from the harassed peasantry, and squander it on their pleasure and amusement. Their craze for merriment and revelry very often reached the depths of hideous savagery.

The authors of Civilization, Past and Present have painted a lurid picture of the contradictory passions of the Byzantine society for religious experience as well as its love for sports and recreation marked by moral corruption.

"Byzantine social life was marked by tremendous contrasts. The religious attitude was deeply ingrained in the popular mind. Asceticism and monasticism were widespread throughout the empire, and to an extraordinary degree even the most commonplace individual seemed to take a vital interest in the deepest theological discussions, while all the people were much

affected by a religious mysticism in their daily life. But, in contrast, the same people were exceptionally fond of all types of amusements. The great Hippodrome, accommodating 80,000 wide eyed spectators, was the scene of hotly disputed chariot races which split the entire populace into rival factions of 'Blue' and ‘Green.’ The Byzantine people possessed both a love of beauty and a streak of cruelty and viciousness. Their sports were often bloody and sadistic, their tortures horrible, and their aristocratic lives were a mixture of luxury, intrigue, and studied vices.

Egypt had vast resources of corn and shipping on which Constantinople largely depended for its prosperity, but the whole machinery of the imperial government in that province was directed to the sole purpose of squeezing profits from the ruled for the benefit of the rulers. In religious matters, too, the policy of suppressing the Jacobite heresy was pursued relentlessly. In short, Egypt was like a milking cow whose masters were only interested in sucking her milk without providing any fodder to her.

Syria, another fair dominion of the Byzantine Empire, was always treated as a hunting ground for the imperiousness and expansionist policy of the imperial government. Syrians were treated as slaves, at the mercy of their master, for they could never pretend to have any claim to a kind or considerate behavior upon their rulers. The taxes levied upon them were so excessive in amount and so unjust in incidence that the Syrians had very often

to sell their children for clearing the government dues. Unwarranted persecution, confiscation of property, enslavement and impressed labor were some of the common features of the Byzantine rule. (Kurd 'Ali, Khutat Sham, Vol. i, p.101)

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Zoroastrianism is the oldest religion of Iran. Zarathushtra, the founder of Zoroastrianism, lived probably about 600-650 B.C. The Persian empire, after it had shaken off the Hellenistic influence, was larger in size and greater in wealth and splendor than the Eastern Roman or Byzantine empire. Ardashir I, the architect of Sasanian dynasty, laid the foundation of his kingdom by defeating Artabanus V in 224 A.D. In its heyday of glory the Sasanid Empire extended over Assyria, Khozistan, Media, Fars (Persia), Azarbaijan At-Tabaristan (Mazandaran), Saraksh, Marjan, Marv, Balkh (Bactria), Saghd (Sagdonia), Sijistan (Seastene), Hirat, Khurasan, Khwarizm (Khiva), Iraq and Yemen, and, for a time, had under its control the areas lying near the delta of the river Sind, Cutch, Kathiawar, Malwa and few other districts.

Ctesiphon (Mada'in), the capital of the Sasanids, combined a number of cities on either banks of the Tigris. During the fifth century and thereafter the Sasanid empire was known for its magnificence and splendor, cultural refinement and the life of ease and rounds of pleasure enjoyed by its nobility.

Zoroastrianism was founded, from the earliest times, on the concept of universal struggle between the ahuras and the daevas, the forces of the good and the evil. In the third century Mani appeared on the scene as a reformer of Zoroastrianism. Sapor I (240-271) at first embraced the precepts uttered by the innovator, remained faithful to them for ten years and then returned to Mazdaism. The Manichaeism was based on a most thorough going dualism of the two conflicting souls in man, one good and the other bad. In order, therefore, to get rid of the latter, preached Mani, one should practice strict asceticism and abstain from women. Mani spent a number of years in exile and returned to Iran after the accession of Bahram I to the throne, but was arrested, convicted of heresy, and beheaded. His converts must have remained faithful to his teachings, for we know that Manichaeism continued to influence Iranian thought and society for a long time even after the death of Mani. (Iran ba 'Ahd-i-Sasaniyan, pp.233-269)

Mazdak, the son of Baudad, was born at Nishapur in the fifth century. He also believed in the twin principle of light and darkness but in order to put down the vile emanating from darkness, he preached community of women and goods, which all men should share equally, as they do water, fire and wind. Mazdakites soon gained enough influence, thanks to the support of Emperor Kavadh, to cause a communistic upheaval in the country. The rowdy element got liberty to take forcible possession of wives and property of other citizens. In an ancient manuscript known as Namah Tinsar the ravages done to

the Iranian society by the application of the communistic version of Mazdaeism have been graphically depicted as under:

"Chastity and manners were cast to the dogs. They came to the fore who had neither nobility nor character, nor acted uprightly, nor had any ancestral property; utterly indifferent to their families and the nation, they had no trade or calling; and being completely heartless they were ever willing to get into mischief, to mince the truth, vilify and malign others; for this was the only profession they knew for achieving wealth and fame."

Arthur Christensen concludes in Iran under the Sasanids:

"The result was that the peasants rose into revolt in many places, bandits started breaking into the houses of nobles to prey upon their property and to abduct their womenfolk. Gangsters took over the possession of landed estates and gradually the agricultural holdings became depopulated since the new owners knew nothing about the cultivation of land." (Iran ba 'Ahd-i-Sasaniyan, p.477)

Ancient Iran had always had a strange proclivity to subscribe to the extremist calls and radical movements, since; it has ever been under the influence of irreconcilable political and religious concepts. It has often been swinging as if by action and reaction, between Epicureanism and strict celibacy; and at others, either yielded passively to despotic feudalism and kingship and preposterous priesthood, or drifted to the other extreme of unruly and

licentious communism; but has always missed that moderate, poised and even temper which is so vital for a heal Your and wholesome society.

Towards the end of the Sasaniyan Empire during the sixth century, all civil and military power was concentrated in the hands of the Emperors who were alienated from the people by an impassable barrier. They regarded themselves as the descendants of celestial gods; Khosrau Parviz or Chosroes II had lavished upon himself this grandiose surname: "The Immortal Soul Among the Gods and Peerless God Among Human Beings; Glorious is whose name; Dawning with the Sunrise and Light of the Dark Eyed Night." (Iran ba 'Ahd-i-Sasaniyan, p.604)

The entire wealth of the country and its resources belonged to the Emperor. The kings, grandees and nobles were obsessed with amassing wealth and treasure, costly gems and curios; were interested only in raising their own standard of living and luxuriating in mirth and merriment to an extent that it is now difficult for us to understand their craze for fun and festivity. He can alone visualize their dizzy rounds of riotous living who has studied the history, literature and poetry of the ancient Iran and is also well informed about the splendor of Ctesiphon, Aiwan-i-Kisra and Bahar-i-Kisra, tiara of the emperors, the awe striking court ceremonials, the number of queens and concubines, slaves, cooks and bearers, pet birds and beasts owned by the emperors and their trainers and all. The life of ease and comfort led by the kings and nobles of Persia can be judged from the way Yazdagird III fled from

Ctesiphon after its capture by the Arabs. He had with him, during his flight, one thousand cooks, one thousand singers and musicians, and one thousand trainers of leopards and a thousand attendants of eagles besides innumerable parasites and hangers on but the Emperor still felt miserable for not having enough of them to enliven his drooping spirits.

The common people were, on the other hand, extremely poor and in great distress. The uncertainty of the tariff on which each man had to pay various taxes gave a pretext to the collectors of taxes for exorbitant exactions. Impressed labor, burdensome levies and conscription in the army as footman, without the inducement of pay or any other reward, had compelled a large number of peasants to give up their fields and take refuge in the service of temples or monasteries. In their bloody wars with the Byzantines, which seemed to be never ending and without any interest or profit to the common man, the Persian kings had been plying their subjects as a cannon fodder.

INDIA

The remarkable achievement of the ancient India in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy had earned her a lasting fame, but the historians are agreed that the era of her social, moral and religious degradation commenced from the opening decades of the sixth century. For shameless and revolting acts of sexual wantonness were consecrated by religion,

even the temples had degenerated into cesspools of corruption. Women had lost their honor and respect in the society and so had the values attached to chastity. It was not unusual that the husband losing in a game of chance dealt out even his wife. The honor of the family, especially in higher classes claiming a noble descent, demanded that the widow should burn herself alive with the funeral pyre of her dead husband. The custom, upheld by society as the supreme act of fealty on the part of a widow to her late husband, was so deep-rooted that it could be completely suppressed only after the establishment of the British rule in India.

India left behind her neighbors, or, rather every other country of the world, in evolving an inflexible and callously inhuman stratification of its society based on social inequality. This system which excluded the original inhabitants of the country as exteriors or outcasts, was formulated to ensure the superiority of conquering Aryans and was invested with an aura of divine origin by the Brahmins. It canalized every aspect of the people's daily life according to heredity and occupation of different classes and was backed by religious and social laws set forth by the religious teachers and legislators. Its comprehensive code of life was applicable to the entire society, dividing it into four distinct classes:

(l) The Brahmins or priests enjoying the monopoly of performing religious rites;

(2) The Kshatriyas of nobles and warriors supposed to govern the country; and,

(3) The Vaisyas or merchants, peasants and artisans;

(4) The Sudras or the non Aryan serfs meant to serve the first three castes.

The Sudras or the dasas meaning slaves (forming a majority in the population), believed to have been born from the feet of Brahma, formed the most degraded class which had sunk socially to the lowest level. Nothing was more honorable for a Sudra, according to, the Manu Shastra, that to serve the Brahmins and other higher castes.

The social laws accorded the Brahmin class distinctive privileges and an honored place in society. "A Brahmin who remembers the Rig Veda", says the Manu Shastra, "is absolutely sinless, even if he debases all the three worlds." Neither any tax could be imposed on a Brahmin, nor he could be executed for any crime. The Sudras, on the contrary, could never acquire any property, nor retain any assets. Not allowed to sit near a Brahmin or touch him, the Sudras were not permitted to read the sacred scriptures!

India was drying up and losing, her vitality. Divided into numerous petty states, struggling for supremacy amongst them, the whole country had been given to lawlessness, mal-administration and tyranny. The country had, furthermore, severed itself from the rest of the world

and retired into her shell. Her fixed beliefs and the growing rigidity of her iniquitous social structure, norms, rites and customs had made her mind rigid and static. Its parochial outlook and prejudices of blood, race and color carried within it the seeds of destruction. Vidya Dhar MaHajjan, formerly Professor of History in the Punjab University College, writes about the state of affairs in India on the eve of Muslim conquest:

"The people of India were living in isolation from the rest of the world. They were so much contented with themselves that they did not bother about what was happening outside their frontiers. Their ignorance of the developments outside their country put them in a very weak position. It also created a sense of stagnation among them. There was decay on all sides. There was not much life in the literature of the period. Architecture, painting and fine arts were also adversely affected. Indian society had become static and caste system had become very rigid. There was no remarriage of widows and restrictions with regard to food and drink became very rigid. The untouchables were forced to live outside the towns."

ARABIA

The idea of virtue, of morals, was unknown to the ancient Bedouin. Extremely fond of wine and gambling, he was hardhearted enough to bury alive his own daughter. Pillage of caravans and cold blooded murder for paltry gains were the typical methods to still the demands

of the nomad. The Bedouin maiden, enjoyed no social status, could be bartered away like other exchangeable goods or cattle or be inherited by the deceased's heir. There were certain foods reserved for men which could not be taken by women. A man could have as many wives as he liked and could dispose of his children if he had not enough means to provide for their sustenance.

The Bedouin was bound by unbreakable bonds of fidelity to his family, blood relations and, finally, to the tribe. Fights and forays were his sport and murder a trifling affair. A minor incident sometimes gave rise to a sanguine and long drawn warfare between two powerful tribes. Oftentimes these wars were prolonged to as many as forty years in which thousands of tribesmen came to a violent end.

EUROPE

At the beginning of the Middle Ages the torch of knowledge flickered dimly and all the literary and artistic achievements of the classical past seemed destined to he lost for ever under the young and vigorous Germanic races which had risen to political power in the northern and western parts of Europe. The new rulers found neither pleasure nor honor in the philosophy, literature and arts of the nations outside their frontiers and appeared to be as filthy as their minds were filled with superstition. Their monks and clergymen, passing their lives in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture,

and wailing before the ghastly phantoms of their delirious brains, were abhorrent to the company of human beings. They still debated the point whether a woman had the soul of a human being or of a beast, or was she blest with a finite or infinite spirit. She could neither acquire nor inherit any property nor had the right to sell or transfer the same.

Robert Briffault writes in the Making of Humanity:

"From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had once been a great civilization. The features and impress of that civilization were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, e. g. in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution."

The Era of Darkness and Depression

The sixth century in which the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islam was born was, to be brief, the darkest era of history: it was the most depressing period in which the crestfallen humanity had abandoned all hopes of its revival and renaissance. This is the conclusion drawn by noted historian, H. G. Wells, who recapitulates the condition of the world at the time when Sasanid and Byzantine Empires had worn themselves out to a death like weariness:

"Science and Political Philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying Empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the texts of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought, to carry on the tradition of frank statement and inquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of this class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age. In both Persia and Byzantium it was an age of intolerance. Both Empires were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind."

The same writer, after describing the events leading to the onslaught of the Sasanids on Byzantium and eventual victory of the latter, throws light on the depth of social

and moral degradation to which both these great nations had fallen. In these words:

"A Prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian Empires were manifestly bent upon a mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted."

Man had forgotten his Master, and had thus become oblivious of his own self, his future and his destiny. He had lost the sense to draw a distinction between vice and virtue, good and bad; it seemed as if something had slipped through his mind and heart, but he did not know what it was. He had neither any interest nor time to apply his mind to the questions like faith and hereafter. He had his hands too full to spare even a moment for what constituted the nourishment of his inner self and the Spirit, ultimate redemption or deliverance from sin, service to humanity and restoration of his own moral health. This was the time when not a single man could be found in a whole country who seemed to be anxious about his faith, who worshipped the One and only Lord of the world without. associating partners to Him or who appeared to be sincerely worried about the darkening future of humanity. This was the situation then obtaining in the world, so graphically depicted by God in the Qur'aan:

"Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return." [Qur'aan 30:41]

NEED OF A NEW PROPHET

The old world was completely disarranged by the middle of the sixth century and man had fallen to such a depth of depravity that no reformer, revivalist or religious preacher could have hoped to put a new life in the humanity worn to its bones. The problem was not to fight any particular heresy or to its reshape a given mode of divine service, nor the question was how to curb the social evils of any society; for, there has never been any dearth of social reformers and religious preachers in any age or place. How to clear the contaminating debris of idolatry and fetishism, superstition and paganism, piling up from generation to generation during the past hundreds of years over the true teachings of the Prophets sent by God, was indeed a task, exceedingly toilsome and unwieldy. It was a Herculean task to make a clean sweep of this wreckage and then raise a new edifice on the foundations of piety and godliness. In short, the question was how to remake man who could think and feel differently from his predecessors as a changed an, re-born or brought back to life again.

"Is he who was dead and we have raised him unto life, and set for him a light wherein he walketh

among men, as him whose similitude is in utter darkness whence he cannot emerge?" [Qur'aan 6:123]

In order to solve the problem of man once for all, it was necessary to root out paganism so completely that no trace of it was left in his heart, and to plant the sapling if monotheism so deeply that it should be difficult to conceive of a more secure foundation.

It meant to create a penchant for seeking the pleasure of God and humbling oneself before Him, to bring into existence the longing to serve humanity, to generate the will to keep always to the right path and to sow the seeds of that moral courage which restrains all evil passions and desires. The whole problem, in a nutshell, was how to rescue humanity, then too willing to commit suicide, from the misery of this world as well as of the next. It was an endeavor which makes a beginning in the form of a virtuous life, like that of an elect and godly soul, and then leads on to the paradise promised by God to those who are God-fearing and just.

The advent of the Prophet (ﷺ) was thus the greatest Divine blessing on mankind; that is why it has been so elegantly clothed in words by the Writ of God.

"And remember Allah's favor unto you: how you were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that you became as brothers by His grace; and (how) you were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you, from it." [Qur'aan 3:103]

No task more delicate and baffling and no charge more onerous and gigantic than that entrusted to Muhammed the Messenger of God (ﷺ), was imposed on any man since birth of man on this planet. And never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution as the Last Prophet (ﷺ) for he has guided millions of men of many nationalities to the path of justice, truth and virtue by putting a new life in the humanity at the throes of death in the sixth century. It was the greatest marvel of human history, the greatest miracle the world has ever witnessed. The well-known French poet and litterateur, Lamartine, bears witness to the grand accomplishment of the Prophet (ﷺ) Muhammed in a language of incomparable elegance and facility.

"Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman; to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto men end men unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other aid, except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert."

Lamartine goes on further to enumerate the achievements of the Great Prophet (ﷺ):

"...And more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become Law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left us as the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality, the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immaterial God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammed; the conquest of one-third of the earth to his dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of a man but that of reason. The idea of the Unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world."

This universal and enduring revolution whose objective was rejuvenation of humanity or rebuilding of the world anew, demanded a new Prophethood surpassing the Messengership of the old, for the new Prophet (ﷺ) had to hold aloft the banner of Divine guidance and righteousness for all times to come. God has Himself explained the reason for it:

"Those who disbelieve among the People of the Scripture and the idolaters could not have left off (erring) till the clear proof came unto them."

"A Messenger from Allah, reading purified pages containing correct scriptures." [Qur'aan 98:1-3]

Arabia

It was the will of God that the glorious sun of humanity's guidance, which was to illuminate the world without end, should rise from Arabia. For it was the darkest corner of this terrestrial globe, it needed the most radiant daystar to dispel the gloom setting on it.

God had chosen the Arabs as the standard bearers of Islam for propagating its message to the four corners of the world, since these guileless people were simple hearted, nothing was inscribed on the tablets of their mind and heart, nothing so deep engraver as to present any difficulty in sweeping the slate clean of every impression. The Romans and the Iranians and the Indians, instinctually thrilled by the glory of their ancient arts and literatures, philosophies, cultures and civilizations were all crushed by the heavy burden of the past, that is, a conditioned reflex of 'touch not-ism' had got itself indelibly etched in their minds. The imprints in the memory of the Arabs were lightly impressed merely because of their rawness and ignorance or rather their nomadic life, and thus these were liable to he obliterated easily and replaced by new inscriptions. They were, in modern phraseology, suffering from unpreceptiveness which could readily be remedied while other civilized nations, having vivid pictures of the past filled in their minds, were haunted by an obsessive irrationality which could never be dismissed from their thoughts.

The Arabs were frank and unassuming, practical and sober, industrious, venturesome and plain spoken. They were neither double-dealers nor liked to be caught in a trap. Like a people true souled, they were always outspoken and remained firm once they had taken a decision.

The Greeks, the Byzantines and the Iranians were peoples of a different mettle. Accustomed to improving the shining hour as a godsend opportunity, they lacked the grit to fight against injustice and brutality. No ideal, no principle was attractive enough for them: no conviction or call was sufficiently potent to tug at their heartstrings in a way that they could imperil their comfort and pleasure.

Unspoiled by the nicety, polish and ostentatiousness usually produced by the display of wealth and luxury of an advanced culture, the Arabs had not developed that fastidiousness which hardens the heart and ossifies the brain, allows no emotion to catch the flame and always acts as an inhibition when one's faith or conviction demands stirring of the blood. This is the listless apathy which is hardly ever erased from one's heart.

The common ignorance of the Arabs, exempted from the shame or reproach it involves, had helped to conserve the natural briskness and intellectual energy of these people. Being strangers to philosophies and sophistry, ratiocination and lame and impotent quibbling, they had preserved their soundness of mind, dispatch, resoluteness and fervidness of spirit.

The perpetual independence of Arabia from the yoke of invaders had made the Arabs free unacquainted with the pomp or majesty or haughty demeanor of the emperors. The servile temper of the ancient Persia had, contrarily, exalted the Sasanian monarchs to supernatural beings. If any king took a medicine or was given phlebotomy, a proclamation was made in the capital that all and sundry should suspend their trades and business on that day. If the king sneezed, nobody dared raise his voice to say grace, nor was anybody expected to say 'Amen' when the king sent up a prayer. The day any king paid a visit to any noble or chief was regarded an event so memorable that the elated family of the fortunate grandee instituted a new calendar from that day. It was an honor so singular that the grandee was exempted from payment of taxes for a fixed period besides enjoying other rewards, fiefs and robes of honor.

We can imagine what a state audience of the king must have been like for those who were allowed to appear before him. By etiquette, all the courtiers, even the highest nobles and dignitaries, were required to stand silently with their hands folded on the navel, and their heads bowed in reverence. Actually, this was the ceremonial etiquette prescribed for State audience during the reign of Chosroes I (531-579), known as Anushirvan (of the Immortal Soul) and 'Adil (the Just). One can very well visualize the pompous ceremonials in vogue during the reign of Sasanid kings justly reputed as tyrants and despots.

Freedom of speech and expression (and not censure or criticism, in the least) was a luxury never indulged in by anyone in the vast kingdom of the Sasanids. Christensen has related, on the authority of At-Tabari, a story about Chosroes I, passing under the name of 'The dust' among the Sasanid kings, which demonstrates the freedom of allowed by the Iranian kings and the price paid for the imprudence of speaking out the truth.

"He assembled his council and ordered the secretary for taxes to read aloud the new rates of collection. When the secretary had announced the rates, Chosroes I asked twice whether anyone had any objection to the new arrangement. Everybody remained silent but on the third time of asking, a man stood up and asked respectfully whether the king had meant to establish a tax for perpetuity on things perishable, which, as time went on, would lead to injustice. "Accursed and rash!" cried the King, "To what class do you belong?" "I am one of the secretaries", replied the mall "Then', ordered the king, "Beat him to death with pen cases". Thereupon every secretary started beating him with his pen case until the poor man died, and the beholders exclaimed: "O King, we find, all the taxes you have levied upon us, just and fair!' (Iran ba 'Ahad Sasaniyan, p.511)

The horrible condition of the depressed classes in the then India, who were condemned as untouchables by the social and religious laws promulgated by the Aryans, baffles all human understanding. Subjected to it gruesome indignity, this unfortunate class of human being was

treated pretty much the same way as pet animals except that they resembled the species of man. According to this law, a Sudra who assaulted a Brahmin or attempted to do so, was to lose the limb with which the assault was made. The Sudra was forced to drink boiling oil if he made the pretentious claim of teaching somebody. (Manil Shahtra, 10 Chapter) The penalty for killing dogs, cats, frogs, chameleons, crows and owls was the same as that for killing the Sudras. (R.C. Dutt, Ancient India, Vol. III, pp. 324 qnd 343)

Unworthy treatment of their subjects by the Sasanian Emperors had not been the lot of the common man in Byzantium, but in their pride and policy to display the titles and attributes of their omnipotence, the Caesars of Rome had all the signs of their oriental counterparts.

Victor Chopart writes about the arbitrary rule and majesty of the Roman Emperors. "The Caesars were gods, but not by heredity and one who rose to power would become divine in his turn, and there was no mark by which he could be recognized in advance. The transmission of the title of Augustus was governed by no regular constitutional law; it was acquired by victory over rivals, and the Senate did no more than ratify the decision of arms. This ominous fact became apparent in the first century of the Principate, which was merely a continuance of the military dictatorship."

If we compare the servile submission of the common man of Byzantium and Persia with the spirit of freedom and pride, as well as the temperament and social conduct

of the pre-Islamic Arabs, we would see the difference between the social life and natural propensities of the Arabs and other nations of the world.

"May you be safe from frailty", and "Wish you a happy morning", were some of the salutations very often used by the Arabs to hail their kings. So solicitous were they of preserving their dignity and pride, honor and freedom that many a time they even refused to satisfy the demands of their chiefs and rulers. A story preserved by Arab historians admirably describes the rudimentary Arab virtues of courage and outspokenness. An Arab king demanded a mare known as Sikab from its owner belonging to Bani Tamim. The man flatly refused the request and instantly indited a poem of which the opening lines were:

Sikab is a nice mare, good as gold,

Too precious it is to be gifted or sold.

And, in the concluding verse he said:

To grab it from me, make no effort,

For I am competent to balk your attempt.

There was yet another reason for the advent of the last Prophet (ﷺ) in Arabia and it was the Ka'ba, the House of God, built by Abraham and Ishmael as the center for worship of One God.

"Lo ! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca , a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples." [Qur'aan 3:96]

There is a mention of the valley of Baca in the Old Testament. The old translators of the Bible gave this word the meaning of 'a valley of weeping', but better sense seems to have prevailed later on. According to more recent of the Biblical scholars, the word 'signifies rather any valley lacking water, and 'the Psalmist apparently has in mind a -particular valley whose natural condition led him to adopt that name. Now, this waterless valley, which can easily be identified with the valley of Makkah, has been thus mentioned in the Book of Psalms.

> **"Blessed art they that dwell in Your house; they will still be praising thee Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; In whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well."** [Psalm 84:4-6]

The birth of the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) in the city of Makkah was really an answer to the prayer sent up by Abraham and Ishmael while laying the foundation of Ka'ba.They had beseeched God in these words:

> **"Our Lord! And raise up unto them an Messenger from among them, who shall recite unto them Your revelations, and shall teach them the Book and wisdom, and shall cleanse them. Verily You! You art the Mighty, the Wise."** [Qur'aan 2:129]

A standing norm of God Almighty is that He always answers the prayers of those who are pious and devoted and pure in heart. The Messengers of God occupy, without doubt, a higher place than the most devout and the godliest believers. All the earlier scriptures and prophecies bear witness to this fact. Even the Old Testament testifies that the supplication of Abraham in regard to Ishmael met the approval of the Lord. The Book of Genesis says:

> **"And as for Ish'ma-el, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."** (Gen. 17:20)

That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

> **"I am the (result of the) prayer of Abraham and prophecy of Jesus".** (Musnad Imam Ahmad)

The Old Testament still contains, notwithstanding its numerous recensions and alterations, the evidence that this prayer of Abraham was answered by God. Mark the very clear reference in the Book of Deuteronomy to the advent of a Prophet.

> **"The Lord Your God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of Your brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."** (Deut. 18:15)

Now, this being a prognosis by Moses, "Your brethren" clearly indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) promised by God was to be raised from amongst the Ishmaelites who were the cousins of Israelites. God again reiterates His promise in the same Book:

> **"And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him".** (Deut. 18:17-18)

The words 'put my words in his mouth' occurring in this oracle very clearly indicate the advent of the Prophet (ﷺ) who was to recite and deliver to his people the divine revelation exactly as he received them. This prediction has been substantiated by the Qur'aan also.

> **"Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire".** [Qur'aan 53:3]

Again, the Qur'aan says about the revelation vouchsafed to the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ):

> **“Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or behind it. It is! a revelation from the Wise, the Owner Praise.”** [Qur'aan 41:42]

But, quite unlike the Qur'aan, both the Bible and its followers ascribe the authorship of the 'Books' included in the Bible to the 'ancient sages' and the 'great teachers' and never to the Divine Author Himself. Modern Biblical scholars have reached the conclusion that:

> "**Ancient Jewish traditions attributed the authorship of the Pentateuch (with the exceptions of the last eight verses describing Moses' death) to Moses himself. But the many inconsistencies and seeming contradictions contained in it attracted the attention of the Rabbis, who exercised their ingenuity in reconciling them.**"
> (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p.589)

As for the 'Books' forming part of the New Testament, they have never been treated, either literally or in their contents to be of Divine origin. These books really contain a biographical account and anecdotes of Jesus, as narrated by the later scribes, rather than a Book of revelation sent unto the Master.

We now come to the geographical position of Arabia, which, being connected by land and sea routes with the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, occupied the most suitable place for being chosen as the center of enlightenment for radiating divine guidance and knowledge to the entire world. All the three continents had been cradles of great civilizations and powerful empires, while Arabia lay in the center through which passed the merchandise of all the countries , far and near,

affording an opportunity to different nations and races for exchange of thoughts and ideas. Two great empires, Sasanid and Byzantine, on either side of the Arabian Peninsula, governed the history of the world. Both were large, rich and powerful, and both fought each other constantly; yet, Arabia jealously guarded her independence and never allowed either of the two powers to lay its hands on it, barring a few territories lying on its frontiers. Excepting a few peripheral tribes, the Arab of the desert was extremely sensitive to his regal dignity and untrammeled freedom, and he never allowed any despot to hold him in bondage. Such a country, unimpeded by political and social constraints, was ideally suited to become the nucleus of a Universal message preaching human equality, liberty and dignity.

For all these reasons God had selected Arabia, and the city of Makkah within it, for the advent of the Prophet (ﷺ) to whom divine Scripture was to be sent for the last time to pave the way for proclamation of peace throughout the length and breadth of the world from age to age.

> **"Allah knoweth best with whom to place His message."** [Qur'aan 6:125]

Yet, in no part of the Peninsula was there any indication of an awakening or a vexation of spirit showing the sign of life left in the Arabs. There were scarcely a few Hanif, who could be counted on one's fingers, feeling their way towards monotheism but they were no more than the

glowworms in a dark and chilly rainy night incapable of showing the path of righteousness to anybody or providing warmth to one being frozen to death.

This was an era of darkness and depression in the history of Arabia—a period of darkest gloom when the country had reached the rock-bottom of its putrefied decadence, leaving no hope of any reform or improvement. The shape of things in Arabia presented a task far more formidable and baffling than ever faced by any Messenger of God.

Sir William Muir, a biographer of the Prophet (ﷺ), who is ever willing to find fault with the Prophet (ﷺ) and cast derision upon him, has vividly depicted the state of affairs in Arabia before the birth of Muhammed which discredits the view held by certain European orientalists that Arabia was fermenting for a change and looking forward to a man of genius who could respond to it better than any other. Says Sir William Muir:

"During the youth of Mahomet, this aspect of the Peninsula was strongly conservative; perhaps it was never at any period more hopeless."

Reviewing the feeble stir created by Christianity and Judaism in the dark and deep ocean of Arabian paganism, Sir William Muir remarks;

"In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the

feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influence of Judaism had been occasionally visible in the deeper and more troubled currents; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Ka'ba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Makkah held the Arab mind in a thralldom, rigorous and undisputed."

R. Bosworth Smith is another European biographer of the Prophet (ﷺ) who has also reached the same conclusion.

"One of the most philosophical of historians has remarked that of all the revolutions which have had a permanent influence upon the civil history of mankind, none could so little be anticipated by human prudence as that effected by the religion of Arabia. And at first sight it must be confessed that the science of History, if indeed there be such a science, is at a loss to find the sequence of cause and effect which it is the object and the test of all history, which is worthy of the name, to trace it."

The Arabian Peninsula

Arabia is the largest peninsula in the world. The Arabs call it '*Jaziratul-Arab*' which means the "Island of Arabia", although it is not an island, being surrounded by water on three sides only. Lying in the south-west of Asia, the Arabian Gulf is to its east, which was known to the Greeks as Persian Gulf; the Indian Ocean marks the southern limits; and to its west is Red Sea which was called Sinus Arabicus or Arabian Gulf by the Greeks and Latins and Bahr Qulzum by the ancient Arabs. The northern boundry is not well-defined, but may be considered an imaginary line drawn due east from the head of the Gulf of al-'Aqabah in the Red Sea to the mouth of the Euphrates.

Arab geographers have divided the country into five regions:

(1) Hijaz extends from Aila (al-'Aqabah) to Yemen and has been so named because the range of mountains running parallel to the western coast separates the low coastal belt of Tihama from Najd

(2) Tihama inside the inkier range is a plateau extending to the foothills

(3) Yemen, south of Hijaz, occupies the south-west corner of Arabia

(4) Najd, the north central plateau, extends from the mountain ranges of Hijaz in the west to the deserts of

Bahrain in the east and encompasses a number of deserts and mountain ranges

(5) 'Aruz which is bounded by Bahrain to its east and Hijaz to its west. Lying between Yemen and Najd it was also known as Yamamah.

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

One of the driest and hottest countries of the world, ninety percent of Arabia is made up of barren desert. The geological and physical features of the land along with its climatic conditions have kept its population, in the days gone by and also in the present time, to the minimum and hindered the flowering of large civilizations and empires. The nomadic life of the desert tribes, rugged individualism of the people and unrestrained tribal warfare have tended to limit the settled population to the areas where there is abundance of rainfall or water is available on the surface of land in the shape of springs or ponds or is found nearer the surface of the earth. The Bedouins dig deep wells in the ground. The way of life in Arabia is, so to say, dictated by the availability of water; nomadic tribes continually move about in the desert in search of water. Wherever verdant land is found, the tribes go seeking pastures but they are never bound to the land like the tillers of the soil. They stay over a pasture or oasis so long as they can graze their flocks of sheep, goats and camels and then break up their camps to search out new pastures.

Life in the desert was hard and filled with danger. The Bedouin felt bound to the family and to the clan, on which depended his existence in the arid desert; loyalty to the tribe meant for him the same life-long alliance as others feel for the nation and state. His life was unstable and vagrant; like the desert, he knew not ease nor comfort; and understood only the language of power, of might. The Bedouin knew no moral code— no legal or religious sanction—nothing save the traditional sentiment of his own and the tribe's honor. In short, it was a life that always brought about hardship and trouble for him and sowed the seeds of danger for the neighboring sedentary populations.

The desert tribes of Arabia were engaged in endless strife amongst themselves and made incursions into the settled lands around them. At the same time, the Arabs displayed a boundless loyalty to their tribes and traditions, were magnanimously hospitable, honored the treaties, were faithful friends and dutifully met the obligations of tribal customs. All these traits of the Arab character are amply illustrated by their forceful and elegant literature, both in prose and poetry, proverbs, metaphors, simile and fables.

CULTURAL CENTERS

In places where there were sufficient periodic rains or water was available in wells or springs settlements used to spring up or the nomads came together during seasonal

fairs and festivals. While such get-togethers exerted a civilizing influence on the life of the Bedouins, the agricultural settlements reflected their specific characteristics depending on climatic conditions and economic and occupational features of the sedentary populations. Accordingly, Makkah had a peculiar cultural development as had other settlements like Yathrib and Hira their own distinguishing cultural features. Yemen was culturally the most developed region in the country owing to its long history and political developments in the recent past. Because of its suitable climate, Yemen had made rapid strides in cultivation of cereals, animal husbandry, quarry of minerals and construction of forts and palaces. It had commercial relations with Iraq, Syria and Africa and imported different commodities needed by it.

ETHNIC DIVISIONS

Arab historians as well as old traditions of the land hold that the people of Arabia can be categorized in three broad divisions. The first of these were the 'Arab Ba'idah (extinct Arabs) who populated the country but ceased to exist before the advent of Islam. The next were the 'Arab 'Ar'ibah (Arabian Arabs) or Banu Qahtan who replaced the 'Arab Ba'idah and the third were the 'Arab Must'arabah (Arabicized Arabs) or the progeny of Ishmael which settled in Hijaz. The line of demarcation drawn according to racial division of the Arab stock makes a

distinction between those descending from Qahtan and 'Adnan; the former are held to be Yemenites or southern Arabs while the latter had settled in Hijaz. Arab genealogists further divide the 'Adnan into two sub-groups which they term as Rabi'a and Mudar. There had been a marked rivalry from the distant past between the Qahtan and the 'Adnan just as the Rabi'a and the Mudar had been hostile to each other. However, the historians trace the origin of the Qahtan to a remoter past from which the 'Adnan branched off at a later time and learned Arabic vernacular from the former. It is held that the 'Adnan were the offspring of Ishmael (Isma'il) who settled in Hijaz after naturalization.

Arab genealogists give great weight to these racial classifications which also find a confirmation in the attitude of Iranians in the olden times. The Iranian general Rustam had admonished his courtiers who had derided Mughira b. Shu'ba and looked down upon him for having presented himself as the envoy of Muslims in tattered clothes, Rustam had then said to his counselors: "You are all fools....The Arabs give little importance to their dress and food but are vigilant about their lineage and family."

LINGUISTIC UNITY

Multiplicity of dialects and languages should not have been at all surprising in a country so big as Arabia (actually, equal to a sub-continent), divided into north and south, not only by the trackless desert, but also by the

rivalry of kindred races and clanish patriotism of a passionate, chauvinistic type, affording but little opportunity for intermixing and unification of the country's population. The tribes living in the frontier regions close to Iranian and Byzantine empires were, quite naturally, open to influences of alien elements. All these factors have given birth to numerous languages in Europe and the Indian subcontinent. In India alone, fifteen languages have been officially recognized by the Constitution of India while there are still people who have to speak in an official language other than their own mother tongue or take recourse to English for being understood by others.

But, the Arabian Peninsula has had, despite its vastness and proliferation of tribes, a common language ever since the rise of Islam. Arabic has been the common lingua franca of the Bedouins living in the deserts as well as of the sedentary and cultured populations like the Qahtan and 'Adnan. Some local variations in the dialects of various regions arising from differences of tones and accents, wide distances and diversity of physical and geographical conditions could not be helped, yet there has always been a linguistic uniformity which has made the Qur'an intelligible to all. It has also been helpful in the rapid diffusion of Islam to the far-flung tribes of Arabia.

ARABIA IN ANCIENT HISTORY

Archaeological excavations show existence of human habitation in Arabia during the earliest period of Stone Age. These earliest remains pertain to Chellean period of Paleolithic epoch. The people of Arabia mentioned in the Old Testament throw light on the relations between the Arabs and ancient Hebrews between 750 to 200 B.C. Similarly, Talmud also refers to the Arabs. Josephus (37—100 B.C.) gives some valuable historical and geographical details about the Arabs and Nabataeans. There are many more Greek and Latin writings of pre-Islamic era, enumerating the tribes living in the Peninsula and giving their geographical locations and historical details, which, notwithstanding the mistakes and inconsistencies in them, are inestimable sources of information about ancient Arabia. Alexandria was also one of those important commercial centers of antiquity which had taken a keen interest in collecting data about Arabia, its people and the commodities produced in that country for commercial purposes.

The classical writers first to mention the Arabians in the Greek literature were Aeschylus (525-465 B. C.) and Herodotus (484-425 B. C.). Several other writers of the classical period have left an account of Arabia and its inhabitants, of these, Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria was an eminent geographer of the second century, whose Almagest occupied an important place in the curriculum of Arabic schools. Christian sources also contain considerable details about Arabia during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic era although these were primarily

written to describe Christianity and its missionary activities in that country.

The numerous references made to the 'Ereb' in the Old Testament are synonymous with the nomadic tribes of Arabia since the word means desert in Semitic and the characteristics of the people described therein apply to the Bedouins. Similarly, the Arabs mentioned in the writings of the Greeks and Romans as well as in the New Testament were Bedouins who used to make plundering raids on the frontier towns of Roman and Byzantine empires, despoiled the caravans and imposed extortionate charges on the traders and wayfarers passing through their territories. Diodorus Siculus, a classical writer of Sicily in the second half of the first century B.C., affirms that the Arabians are "Self reliant and independence-loving, like to live in the open desert and highly prize and value their liberty." The Greek historian Herodotus (484-425 B. C.) also makes a similar remark about them. "They revolt against every power," he says, "which seeks to control their freedom or demean them." The passionate attachment of the Arabs to their personal freedom had been admired by almost all the Greek and Latin writers.

The acquaintance of the Arabs with the Indians and their commercial and cultural relations which India began in the days much before the advent of Islam and their conquest of India. Modern researches on the subject show that of all the Asiatic countries, India was closest to, Arabia and well-acquainted with it.

EARLIER REVEALED RELIGIONS IN ARABIA

Arabia had been the birth-place of several Prophets of God (عليه السلام) in the bygone times. The Qur'aan says:

> **"And make mention (O Muhammed) of the brother of A'ad when he warned his folk among the wind-curved sandhills—and verily warners came and went before and after him—saying: Serve none but Allah. Lo! I fear for you the doom of a tremendous Day.**
> [Qur'aan 46:21]

Prophet Hud (عليه السلام) was sent to the A'ad; a people, according to historians, belonging to the 'Arab Ba'idah who lived in a tract of white or reddish sand blown into hill banks or dunes and covering a vast area to the south-west of al-Rub'e al-Khali (the vacant quarter) near Hadramaut. This region has no habitation and is void of the breath of life, but it was a verdant land in the ancient times, with flourishing towns inhabited by a people of gigantic strength and stature. The whole area was consumed by a fearful and roaring wind which covered it with sand dunes.

The Qur'aanic verse quoted above shows that the Prophet Hud (عليه السلام) was not the only Messenger of God sent to the ancient Arabs of this area as many more 'warners came and went before him'.

Salih (عليه السلام) was another Arabian Prophet sent to the people called Thamud who lived in al-Hijr situated between Tabuk and Hijaz. Prophet Isma'il (عليه السلام) was

brought up in Makkah, and he died in the same city. If we extend the frontiers of the Arabian Peninsula northwards to include Midian on the borders of Syria, Prophet Shu'aib (عليه السلام) would also be reckoned as an Arabian Prophet (ﷺ). The historian Abul Fida says that Midianites were Arabs, living in Midian near Ma'an, which is adjacent to the Sea of Lut (Dead Sea) in Syria on the frontier of Hijaz. The Midianites flourished after the downfall of the people of Lut.

Ancient Arabia had been the cradle of many a civilized and flourishing people to whom God had sent His Prophets. But all of them were either destroyed because of their evil ways or became strangers in their own homeland, or were forced to seek new homes. The Prophets of God born in the lands far away had sometimes to seek refuge in Arabia from the despotic kings of their lands. Ibrahim (Abraham) (عليه السلام) had migrated to Makkah and Moses (عليه السلام) had to flee to Midian. Followers of other religions, too, had to seek shelter in Arabia. The Jews, when persecuted by the Romans, had settled in Yemen and Yathrib while several Christian sects harassed by the Byzantine Emperors had migrated to Najran.

Isma'il in Makkah

The patriarch Ibrahim (Abraham) ﷺ, came down to the valley of Makkah surrounded by mountains, naked rocks and bare and rugged crags. Nothing to sustain life, neither water nor verdure, nor food grains, was to be found there. He had with him his wife Hajjar (Hagar) and their son Isma'il (Ishmael) ﷺ. Ibrahim (ﷺ) had wandered through the deserts of Arabia in order to move away from the wide-spread heathen cult of idol-worship and to set up a centre for paying homage to the One and Only God where he could invite others to bow down before the Lord of the world. He wanted to lay the foundation of a lighthouse of guidance, a sanctuary of peace which should become the radiating centre of true monotheism, faith and righteousness!

God blessed the sincerity of Ibrahim (ﷺ) and the dry valley of this wild country. Ibrahim (ﷺ) had left his wife and his infant son in this inhospitable territory. Here, in the midst of rugged hills, the Master of all the worlds manifested His grace by causing water to issue forth from the earth which is called the well of Zamzam to this day.

When Isma'il (ﷺ) was a few years old, Ibrahim (ﷺ) went to visit his family in Makkah. Ibrahim (ﷺ) now made up his mind to sacrifice Isma'il for the sake of God, for the Lord had commanded him in a dream: 'Offer up Your son Isma'il'. Obedient to the Lord as he was, Isma’il at once agreed to have his throat cut by his father. But,

God saved Isma'il, and instituted the 'day of great sacrifice', in order to commemorate the event for all times, since, he was destined to help Ibrahim (عليه السلام) in his mission and become the progenitor of the last Prophet (ﷺ) as well as of the nation charged to disseminate the message of God and to struggle for it to the end of time.

Ibrahim (عليه السلام) came back to Makkah again and assisted by his son Isma'il (عليه السلام), built the House of God. While the father and the son occupied themselves in the work, they also beseeched God to confer His grace; cause them to live as well as die in Islam; and help their progeny to keep a watch over their patrimony of monotheism, not only by protecting their mission against every risk or peril but also by becoming its standard-bearers and preachers, braving every danger and sacrificing everything for its sake until their call reached the farthest corner of the world. They also supplicated God to raise up a Prophet amongst their offsprings, who should renovate and revive the summons of Ibrahim (عليه السلام) and bring to completion the task initiated by him.

"And when Ibrahim and Ismael were raising the foundations of the House, (Abraham prayed); Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo ! You, only You, art the Hearer, the Knower.

"Our Lord ! and make us submissive unto You and of our seed a nation submissive unto You, and show us our ways of worship, and relent toward us. Lo! You,' only You, are the Relenting, the Merciful.

"Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Your revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow. Lo! You, only You, are the Mighty, the Wise." [Qur'aan 2:127-29]

The prayer sent up by Ibrahim (عليه السلام) included the request that the House he was constructing might become a sanctuary of peace and God might keep his progeny away from idol worship. Ibrahim held nothing more in abomination than idolatrousness, nor deemed anything more fraught with danger for his progeny, for he knew the fate of earlier idolatrous nations. He was aware how the great Prophets of God had earlier struggled and fought this evil throughout their lives, but in no long time after their departure from the world their people were again misled into fetishism by devil's advocates disguised as promoters of faith.

Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had implored the Lord to bless his descendants with his own spirit of struggle against the evil of pantheism and iconolatry. He wanted his heirs to carry into their thoughts how he had to strive all his life for the sake of Truth and Faith; how he had to bid farewell to his hearth and home; realize why he had incurred the wrath of his idolatrous father; and appreciate the wisdom behind his making a selection of that valley, unbelievably bare with no scrap of soil, sheer from top to bottom and jagged and sharp for their habitation. He wanted them to

understand why he had preferred that wilderness, holding no prospects of progress and civilization, over verdant lands and flourishing towns and centers of trade, arts and commerce where one could easily meet one's wishes.

Ibrahim had invoked the blessings of God on his sons so that they might be esteemed and adored by all the nations of the world; that the people of every nation and country might become attached to his children; that they should come from every nook and corner of the world to pay homage to his posterity and thus become a means of satisfying their needs in that barren country. Allah says:

> **"And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Make safe this territory, and preserve me and my sons from serving idols.**
>
> **"My Lord! Lo! They have led many of mankind astray. But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me still You art Forgiving, Merciful. "Our Lord! Lo! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Your holy House, our Lord! that they may establish proper worship; so incline some hearts of men that they may yearn toward them, and provide You them with fruits in order that they may be thankful."** [Qur'aan 14:35-37]

Quraish

God answered each and every prayer sent up by Ibrahim and Isma'il (عليهما السلام). The descendants of Isma'il multiplied exceedingly, so that the barren valley overflowed with the progeny of Ibrahim (عليه السلام). Isma'il (عليه السلام) took for his wife a girl of the tribe of Jurhum, a clan belonging to the 'Arab 'Aribah. In the lineal descendants of Isma'il, 'Adnan was born whose lineage was universally recognised as the most worthy and noble among them. The Arabs being too particular about the purity of race and blood have always treasured the genealogy of 'Adnan's progeny in the store house of their memory.

'Adnan had many sons of whom Ma'add was the most prominent. Among the sons of Ma'add, Mudar was more distinguished; then Fihr b. Malik in the lineage of Mudar achieved eminence; and finally the descendants of Fihr b. Malik b. Mudar came to be known as Quraysh. Thus came into existence the clan of Quraysh, the nobility of Makkah, whose lineage and exalted position among the tribes of Arabia as well as whose virtues of oratory and eloquence, civility, gallantry and high mindedness were unanimously accepted by all. The recognition accorded to the Quraysh without a dissentient voice throughout the Peninsula became, in due course of time, a genuine article of faith to the people of Arabia.

QUSAYY BIN KILAB

Qusayy Bin Kilab was born in the direct line of Fihr but the hegemony of Makkah had, by that time, passed on from Jurhum's clansmen to the hands of the Khuza'ites. Qusayy b. Kilab recovered the administration of the Ka'bah and the town through his organizing capacity and superior qualities of head and heart. The Quraysh strengthened the hands of Qusayy b. Kilab in dislodging the Khuza'ites from the position of leadership usurped by them. Qusayy was now master of the town, loved and respected by all. He held the keys of the Ka'bah and the rights to water the pilgrims from the well of Zamzam, to feed the pilgrims, to preside at assemblies and to hand out war banners. In his hands lay all the dignities of Makkah and nobody entered the Ka'bah until he opened it for him. Such was his authority his Makkah during his lifetime that no affair of the Quraysh was decided but by him, and his decisions were followed like a religious law which could not be infringed.

After the death of Qusayy his sons assumed his authority but 'Abdu Munaf amongst them was more illustrious. His eldest son, Hashim b. 'Abdu Munaf conducted the feeding and watering of the pilgrims, and, after his death the authority passed on to 'Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet (ﷺ). His people held him in the highest esteem and such was the popularity gained by him, so they say, as was never enjoyed by anybody amongst his ancestors.

The progeny of Hashim, who now filled the stage and assumed a commanding position among the Quraysh, was like a stream of light in the darkness of Arabia. The sketches of Bani Hashim preserved by the historians and genealogists, although fewer in number, eloquently speak of the nobility of their character and moderation of their disposition, the reverence they paid to the House of God, their sovereign contempt for the things unjust and uneven, their devotion to fair-play and justice, their willingness to help the poor and the oppressed, their magnanimity of heart, their velour and horsemanship, in short, of every virtue admired by the Arabs of the pagan past. Bani Hashim, however, shared the faith of their contemporaries which had beclouded the light of their soul; but despite this failing, they had to have all this goodness as the forefathers of the great Prophet (ﷺ) who was to inherit their ennobling qualities and to, illustrate them by his own shining example for the guidance of the entire human race.

MAKKAH IN PAGANISM

The Quraysh continued to glorify the Lord of the worlds, from whom all blessings flow, like their forefathers Ibrahim and Isma'il (عليه السلام) until 'Amr b. Luhayy became the chief of Khuza'ites. He was the first to deviate from the religion of Isma'il; he set up idols in Makkah and bade the people to worship and venerate them, he instituted the custom of sa'iba which were to be held in

reverence. 'Amr b. Luhayy also modified the divine laws of permissible and impermissible. It is related that once 'Amr b. Luhayy went from Makkah to Syria on some business where he found the people worshipping idols. He was so impressed by the ways of the idol worshippers that he obtained a few idols from them, brought them back to Makkah and asked the people there to pay divine honors to them.

It might have been so, or, perhaps, on his way to Syria 'Amr b. Luhayy had happened to pass through *Betra* which was variously known to ancient historians and geographers as Petraea and Petra. It was the key city on the caravan route between Saba and the Mediterranean, located on an arid plateau three thousand feet high, to the south of what is today called Transjordan, as mentioned by the Greek and Roman historians. The city was founded by the Nabataeans, ethnically an Arab tribe, in the early part of the sixth century B. C. These people carried their merchandise to Egypt, Syria, valley of the Euphrates and to Rome. Most likely, they took the way to the valley of the Euphrates through Hijaz. The Nabataeans were an idolatrous people who made their deities of graven stones. Some historians hold the view that al-Lat, the famous deity of the Northern Hijaz during the pre-Islamic period, had been originally imported from Petra and was assigned an honored place among the local gods and goddess.

The above view finds a confirmation in the History of Syria by Philip K. Hitti who writes about the religion of Nabataean kingdoms:

"At the head of the pantheon stood Dushara (dhu-al-Shara, Dusara), a sun deity worshipped under the form of anobelisk or an unknown four-cornered black stone.... Associated with Dushara was Al-Lat, chief goddess of Arabia. Other Nabataean goddesses cited in the inscriptions were Manat and al-'Uzza, of Koranic fame, Hubal also figures in the inscriptions."

It is noteworthy that the above description relates to a period when idolatry had, in different forms and shapes, engulfed Arabia and the countries around it. Jesus Christ (عليه السلام) and his disciples had not yet appeared on the scene who later on laboured to restrain its unbridled expansion. Judaism had already proved its incompetence to the task, since, being essentially a racial religion; it allowed none save the children of Bani Israel to join his faith to the creed of monotheism preached by it.

Another writer, De Lacy O'Leary, tracing the influences responsible for introduction of idol worship in the Arabian Peninsula sums up his findings in the "Arabia before Muhammed" in these words:

"It seems fairly safe therefore to understand that the use of images was an instance of Syro-Hellenistic culture which had come down the trade-route; it was a recent introduction in Makkah in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was probably unknown to the Arab community at large."

Worship the idols was thus the popular creed of the people in the valley of the Euphrates and the lands to the east of Arabia. As the Arabians were bound, since times immemorial, by the ties of commerce with these countries, it is not unlikely that their cultural influence was responsible for grafting idol worship within the Arabian Peninsula. In his history of Ancient Iraq, Georges Roux says that during the third century B.C. and long thereafter idol-worship was very popular in Mesopotamia. Its every city, old or new, gave shelter to several foreign gods besides the local deities."

There are also reports which suggest that idol worship gradually; came into vogue among the Quraysh. In olden times, as some historians relate, when anybody went out on a long journey from Makkah he took a few stones from the enclosures of the sanctuary as a mark of grace with him. In due course of time, they started venerating the monoliths they admired most. The subsequent generations, not knowing the reason for holding such monoliths in esteem, started worshipping them like other pagan people of the surrounding countries. The Quraysh, however, remained attached to some of the older traditions like paying deference to the holy sanctuary, its circumambulation, and the greater and lesser pilgrimages: Hajj and 'Umra.

The gradual evolution of different religions showing substitution of means for the ends and the slow progression from suppositions to conclusions lend support to the view put forth by the historians about the

beginning of idol worship among the Quraysh. The esteem and reverence in which even certain misguided Muslim sects come to hold the portraits and sepulchers of the saints and the way they sluggishly adopt this course possesses an incriminating evidence in support of the gradual evolution of idol worship. That is why the Islamic Shari'ah completely stalls all those tracks and alleys which lead to the undue veneration of personages, places and relics for they ultimately lead to ascribing partners to God.

THE BATTLE OF THE ELEPHANTS

It was during this period that a significant event, unparalleled in the history of Arabia, came to pass which portended something of vital importance likely to take place in the near future. It augured well for the Arabs, in general, and predicted a unique honor for the Ka'bah, never attained by any place of worship anywhere in the world. The incident afforded hope for expecting a great future for the Ka'bah—a future on which depended the destiny of religions or rather the entire humanity since it was soon to unfold itself in the shape of an eternal message of righteousness and peace.

AN IMPLICIT BELIEF OF THE QURAYSH

The Quraysh had always held the belief that the House of God had a special place of honor in the eyes of the Lord Who was Himself its protector and defender. The trust

placed by the Quraysh in the inviolability of the Ka'bah is amply borne out by the conversation between Abraha and 'Abdul Muttalib. It so happened that Abraha seized two hundred camels belonging to 'Abdul Muttalib, who, then, called upon him and sought permission to see Abraha. Abraha treated 'Abdul Muttalib with the greatest respect and got off his throne and made him sit by his side. Asked to tell the purpose of his visit, 'Abdul Muttalib replied that he wanted the King to return his two hundred camels which the King had taken.

Abraha, taken by surprise, asked 'Abdul Muttalib, "Do you wish to talk about your two hundred camels taken by me, but you say nothing about the House on which depends your religion and the religion of your forefathers, which I have come to destroy?" 'Abdul Muttalib boldly replied "I am the owner of the camels and the House has an Owner Who will Himself defend it".

Abraha said again, "How can it be saved from me?"

"This is a matter between you and Him", replied 'Abdul Muttalib."(Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp.49-50)

Who could dare to do harm or cast a blighting glance at the House of God? Its protection was, in truth, the responsibility of God.

The episode, briefly, was that Abraha al-Ashram, who was the viceroy of Negus, the King of Abyssinia, in Yemen built an imposing cathedral in Sana'a and gave it the name of al-Qullays. He intended to divert the Arab's pilgrimage to this cathedral. Being a Christian, Abraha had found it

intolerably offensive that the Ka'bah should remain the great national shrine, attracting crowds of pilgrims from almost every Arabian clan. He desired that his cathedral should replace Ka'bah as the most sacred chapel of Arabia.

This was, however, something inglorious for the Arabs. Veneration of the Ka'bah was a settled disposition with the Arabs: they neither equated any other place of worship with the Ka'bah nor they could have exchanged it with anything howsoever precious. The perturbation caused by the declared intentions of Abraha set them on fire. Some Kinanite dare-devils accepted the challenge and one of them defiled the cathedral by defecating in it. Now, this caused a serious tumult. Abraha was enraged and he swore that he would not take rest until he had destroyed the Ka'bah.

Abraha took the road to Makkah at the head of a strong force which included a large number of elephants. The Arabs had heard awesome stories about elephants. The news made them all confused and bewildered. Some of the Arab tribes even tried to obstruct the progress of Abraha's army, but they soon realised that it was beyond their power to measure swords with him. Now, hoping against hope, they left the matter to God putting their trust in Him to save the sacred sanctuary.

The Quraysh took to the hills and craggy gorges in order to save themselves from the excesses of Abraha's soldiers. 'Abdul Muttalib and a few other persons belonging to the Quraysh took hold of the door of the Ka'bah, praying and

imploring God to help them against Abraha. On the other side, Abraha drew up his troops to enter the town and got his elephant 'Mahmud' ready for attack. On his way to the city, the elephant knelt down and did not get up in spite of severe beating. But when they made it face Yemen, it got up immediately and started off.

God then sent upon them flocks of birds, each carrying stones in its claws. Everyone who was hit by these stones died. The Abyssinians thereupon withdrew in fright by the way they had come, continually being hit by the stones and falling dead in their way. Abraha, too, was badly smitten, and when his soldiers tried to take him back, his limbs fell one by one, until he met a miserable end on reaching San'a (101). The incident finds a reference in the Qur'aan also.

> **"Hast You not seen how Your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not bring their stratagem to naught, And send against them swarms of flying creatures, Which pelted them with stones of baked clay, And made them like green crops devoured (by cattle)?"** [Qur'aan 105:1-5]

REPERCUSSIONS OF ABRAHA'S FAILURE

When God turned back the Abyssinians from Makkah, crushed and humbled, and inflicted His punishment upon them, the Arabs, naturally, looked up to the Quraysh in great respect. They said: "Verily, these are the people of God: God defeated their enemy—and they did not have

even to fight the assailants." The esteem of the people for the Ka'bah naturally increased strengthening their conviction in its sanctity. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. 1, p.57)

It was undoubtedly a miracle; a sign of the advent of a Prophet (ﷺ) who was to cleanse the Ka'bah of its contamination of idols. It was an indication that the honour of the Ka'bah was to rise with the final dispensation to be brought by him. One could say that the incident foretold the advent of the great Prophet (ﷺ).

The Arabians attached too much importance, and rightly too, to this great event. They instituted a new calendar from the date of its occurrence. Accordingly, we find in their writings such references as that a certain event took place in the year of Elephant or that such and such persons were born in that year or that a certain incident came to pass so many years after the Year of Elephant. This year of miracle was 570 A.D.

The Metropolis

Historical records, collections of pre-Islamic poetry, and what is known of the habits, customs, norms and traditions of the Arabians show that the people of Makkah had already been drawn into the stream of urban culture from their earlier rural, nomadic existence.

The Qur'aan describes the city as 'the Mother of towns'.

> **"And thus we have inspired in thee a Lecture in Arabic, that You may warn the mother-town and those around it, and may warn of a day of assembling whereof there is no doubt. A host will be in the Garden and a host of them in the Flame".** [Qur'aan 42:7]

At another place Makkah is designated as the 'land made safe'.

"By the fig and the olive, by Mount Sinai, and by this land made safe". [Qur'aan 95:1-3]

The Qur'aan also calls it a city.

"Nay I swear by this city— And You art an indeweller of this city". [Qur'aan 90:1-2]

Makkah had long passed from nomadic barbarism to the stage of urban civilization by the middle of the fifth century. The city was ruled by a confederacy based on

mutual cooperation, unity of purpose and a general consensus on the division of administrative and civil functions between self governing clans, and this system had already been brought into existence by Qusayy b. Kilab. Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) being fifth in the line of succession to Qusayy b. Kilab, the latter can be placed in the middle of the fifth century.

Makkah, thinly populated in the beginning, was located between the two hills called Jabl Abu Qubays (adjacent to Mount Safa) and Jabl Ahmar, known as 'Araf during the pre-lslamic days, opposite the valley of Quaqiq'an. The population of the town increased gradually owing partly to the reverence paid to the Ka'bah and the regardful position of its priests and attendants, and partly because of the peace prevailing in the vicinity of the sanctuary. The tents and shacks had given place to houses made of mud and stones and the habitation had spread over the hillocks and low-lying valleys around the Ka'bah. At the outset the people living in Makkah abstained from constructing even their housetops in a rectangular shape like the Ka'bah since they considered it to be a sign of disrespect to the House of God, but gradually the ideas changed; still, they kept the height of their houses lower than that of that Ka'bah. As related by certain persons, the houses were initially made in a circular shape as a mark of respect to the Ka'bah. The first rectangular house, reported to have been built by Humaid Bin Zuhair, was looked upon with disfavor by the Quraysh.

The chiefs and other well-to-do persons among the Quraysh usually built their houses of stones and had many rooms in them, with two doors on the opposite sides, so that the womenfolk did not feel inconvenience in the presence of guests.

RECONSTRUCTION OF MAKKAH

Qusayy b. Kilab had played a leading role in the reconstruction and expansion of Makkah. The Quraysh who had been dispersed over a wide area, were brought together by him in the valley of Makkah. He allocated areas for settlement of different families and encouraged them to construct their houses in the specified localities. The successors of Qusayy continued to consolidate the living quarters and to allocate spare lands to new families coming into Makkah. The process continued peacefully for a long time with the result that the habitations of the Quraysh and their confederate clans grew up making Makkah a flourishing city.

THE CITY STATE

Qusayy b. Kilab and his had assumed a commanding position over the city and its inhabitants. They were the custodians of the Ka'bah, had the privilege of Saqayah or watering the pilgrims and arranging the annual feast, presided over the meetings of the House of Assembly (Dar-al-Nadwa) and handed out war banners.

Qusayy b. Kilab had built the House of Assembly close to the Ka'bah with one of its doors leading to the sanctuary. It was used both as a living quarter by Qusayy and the rendezvous for discussing all matters of common weal by the Quraysh. No man or woman got married, no discussion on any important matter was held, no declaration of war was made and no sheet of cloth was cast on the head (104) of any girl reaching marriageable age except in this house. Qusayy's authority during his life and after his death was deemed sacrosanct like religious injunctions which could not be violated by anybody. The meetings of the House of Assembly could be attended only by the Quraysh and their confederate tribesmen, that is, those belonging to Hashim, Umayya, Makhzum, Jomah, Sahm, Taym, 'Adiy, Asad, Naufal and Zuhra, whatever be their age, while people of other tribes not below the age of forty years were allowed to participate in its meetings.

After the death of Qusayy, the offices held by him were divided between different families. Banu Hashim were given the right of watering the pilgrims; the standard of Quraysh called 'Aqab (Lit. Eagle) went to Banu Umayya; Bani Naufal were allocated Rifada; Banu 'Abdul-Dar were assigned priesthood, wardenship of the Ka'bah and the standard of war; and Banu Asad held the charge of the House of Assembly. These families of the Quraysh used to entrust these responsibilities to the notable persons belonging to their families.

Thus, Abu Bakr (ﷺ), who came from Banu Taym, was responsible for realizing blood-money, fines and gratuity; Khalid (ﷺ) of Banu Makhzum held charge of the apparatus of war kept in a tent during the peace-time and on the horseback during battles; 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ﷺ) was sent as the envoy of Quraysh to other tribes with whom they intended to measure swords or where a tribe bragging of its superiority wanted the issue to be decided by a duel; Safwan b. Umaayah of Bani Jomah played at the dice which was deemed essential before undertaking any important task; and, Harith b. Qays was liable to perform all administrative business besides being the custodian of offerings to the idols kept in the Ka'bah. The duties allocated to these persons were hereditary offices held earlier by their forefathers.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

The Quraysh of Makkah used to fit out two commercial Caravans, one to Syria during the summer and the other to Yemen during the winter season. The four months of Hajj, that is, Rajab, Dhul-Q'ada, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram, were deemed sacred when it was not lawful to engage in hostilities. During these months the precincts of the Holy Temple and the open place besides it were utilized as a trade centre to which people from distant places came for transacting business. All the necessaries required by the Arabs were easily available in this market of Makkah. The stores for the sale of various commodities,

located in different lanes and byways, mentioned by the historians, tend to show the economic and cultural growth of Makkah. The vendors of attars had their stalls in a separate bylane and so were the shops of fruit-sellers, barbers, grocers, fresh dates and other wares and trades localized in different alleys. A number of these markets were spacious enough, as, for example, the market set apart for food-grains was well-stocked with wheat, ghee (clarified butter), honey and similar other commodities. All these articles were brought by trading caravans. To cite an instance, wheat was brought to Makkah from Yamama. Similarly, cloth and shoe stores had separate quarters allocated to them in the market.

Makkah had also a few meeting places where carefree young men used to come together for diversion and pastime. Those who were prosperous and accustomed to live high, spent the winter in Makkah and the summer in Ta'if. There were even some smart young men known for their costly and trim dresses costing several hundred dirhams.

Makkah was the centre of a lucrative trade transacting business on a large scale. Its merchants convoyed caravans to different countries in Asia and Africa and imported almost everything of necessity and costly wares marketable in Arabia. They usually brought resin, ivory, gold and ebony from Africa; hide, incense, frankincense, spices, sandal-wood and saffron from Yemen; different oils and food-grains, amour, silk and wines from Egypt and Syria; cloth from Iraq: and gold, tin, precious stones

and ivory from India. The wealYour merchants of Makkah sometimes presented the products of their city, of which the most valued were leather products, to the kings and nobles of other countries. When the Quraysh sent 'Abdullah b. Abu Rabl'a and 'Amr b. al-'As to Abyssinia to bring back the Muslim fugitives, they sent with them leather goods of Makkah as gifts to Negus and his generals.

Women also took part in commercial undertakings and fitted out their own caravans bound for Syria and other countries. Khadija bint Khuwaylid and Hanzaliya, mother of Abu Jahl, were two merchant women of dignity and wealth. The following verse of the Qur'an attests the freedom of women to ply a trade.

> **"Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned."** [Qur'aan 4:32]

Like other advanced nations of the then world, the commercially minded citizens of Makkah had based their economy on commerce for which they sent out caravans in different directions, organized stock markets and created favorable conditions in the home market for the visiting tourists and traders. This helped to increase fame and dignity of Makkah as a religious centre and contributed in no mean measure to the prosperity of the city. Everything required by the people of Makkah, whether a necessity or a luxury, reached their hands

because of the city's commercial importance. This fact finds a reference in these verses of the Qur'aan:

> **"So let them worship the Lord of this House, Who hath fed them against hunger, And hath made them safe from fear"** [Qur'aan 106:3-5]

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Makkah was thus the chief centre of business in Arabia and its citizens were prosperous and wealthy. The caravan of the Quraysh, involved in the battle of Badr while returning from Syria, consisted of a thousand camels and carried merchandise worth 50,000 dinars.

Both Byzantine and Sasanian currencies, known as dirham and dinar, were in general use in Makkah and other parts of the Peninsula. Dirham was of two kinds: one of it was an Iranian coin known to the Arabs bagliyah and sauda'-I-damiyah, and the other was a Byzantine coin (Greek-drachme) which was called tabriyah and bazantiniyah. These were silver coins and therefore instead of using them as units of coinage, the Arabs reckoned their values according to their weights. The standard weight of dirham, according to the doctors of lslamic Shari'ah, is equal to fifty-five grains of barley and ten dirhams are equivalent in weight to seven mithqals of gold. One mithqal of pure gold is, however, according to Ibn Khaldun, equal to the weight of seventy-two grains of

barley. Doctors of law unanimously agree with the weight given by Ibn Khaldun.

The coins in current use during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) were generally silver coins. 'Ata states that the coins in general use during the period were not gold but silver coins. (Ibn Abi Sha'iba, Vol. 3, p.222)

Dinar was a gold coin familiar to the Arabs as the Roman (Byzantine) coin in circulation in Syria and Hijaz during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period. It was minted in Byzantium with the image and name of the Emperor impressed on it as stated by Ibn 'Abd-ul-Bar in the Al-Tamhid. Old Arabic manuscripts mention the Latin denarius aureus as the Byzantine coin (synonymous with the post-Constantine sol dus) which is stated to be the name of a coin still a unit of currency in Yugoslavia. The New Testament, too, mentions denarius at several places. Dinar was considered to have the average weight of one mithqal, which, as stated above, was equivalent to seventy-two grains of barley. It is generally believed that the weight standard of the dinar was maintained from the pre-Islamic days down to the 4th century of the Hijrah. Da'iratul Ma'arif Islamiyah says that the Byzantine denarius weighed 425 grams and hence, according to the Orientalist Zambawar, the mithqal of Makkah was also of 425 grams. The ratio of weight between dirham and dinar was 7:lO and the former weighed seven-tenths of a mithqal.

The par value of the dinar, deduced from the hadeeth, fiqah and historical literature, was equivalent to ten dirhams. 'Amr b. Shuyeb, as quoted in the Sunan Abu Dawud, relates: "The blood money during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) was 800 dinars or 8,000 dirhams, which was followed by the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), until the entire Muslim community unanimously agreed to retain it." The authentic ahadeeth fix the nisab or the amount of property upon which Zakat is due, in terms of dirham, at 20 dinars. This rule upheld by a consensus of the doctors of law goes to show that during the earlier period of Islamic era and even before it, a dinar was deemed to have a par value of ten dirhams or other coins equivalent to them.

Imam Malik says in the Muwatta that 'the accepted rule, without any difference of opinion, is that zakat is due on 20 dinars or 200 dirhams'. The weights and measures in general use in those days were Saa', mudd, ratal, ooqiyah and mithqal to which a few more were added latter on. The Arabs also possessed knowledge of arithmetic, for, it is evident, that the Qur'aan had relied on their ability to compute the shares of the legatees in promulgating the Islamic law of inheritance.

PROSPEROUS FAMILIES OF QURAYSH

Bani Umayya and Bani Makhzum were the two prominent families of the Quraysh favored by the stroke of luck. Walid b. al-Mughira, 'Abdul 'Uzza (Abu Lahab),

Abu Uhayha b. Sa'eed b. al-'As b. Umayya (who had a share of 30,000 dinars in the caravan of Abu Sufyan) and 'Abd b. Abdul Rabi'a al-Makhzum had made good fortunes. 'Abdullah b. Jad'an of Banu Taym was also one of the wealthiest persons of Makkah who used to drink water in a cup of gold and maintained a public kitchen for providing food to every poor and beggar. 'Abbaas Ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib was another man abounding in riches who spent lavishly on the indigent and the needy and lent money at interest in Makkah. During his farewell Pilgrimage when the Prophet (ﷺ) abolished usurious transactions, he declared: "The first usury I abolish today is that of 'Abbaas b. 'Abdul Muttalib".

Makkah had also men rolling in riches whose well-furnished drawing rooms were the rendezvous of the elite of the Quraysh who rejoiced in the pleasures of wine, love and romance.

The chiefs of the Quraysh usually had their sittings in front of the Ka'bah in which prominent poets of pre-Islamic days, such as, Labid, recited their poems. It was here that 'Abdul Muttalib used to have his gatherings and, as they say, his sons dared not take their seats around him until their father had arrived.

CULTURE AND ARTS

Industrial arts and crafts were looked down on by the Quraysh; they considered it beneath their dignity to have their hands in a handiwork. Manual occupations were

regarded as occupation meant exclusively for the slaves or non-Arabs. Yet, notwithstanding this proclivity of the Quraysh, certain crafts were a dire necessity and were practiced by some of them. Khabhab b. al-Aratt is reported to have been engaged in manufacturing swords. Constructional activities were also indispensable but Iranian and Byzantine workmen were employed to do the job for the Quraysh.

A few men in Makkah knew the art of reading and writing but the Arabs, as whole, were ignorant of the way by which learning is imparted. The Qur'an also calls them *Ummi* or an unlettered people:

"He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own."

The people of Makkah were however, not ignorant of the arts of civilisation. Their refined taste, polish and culture excelled them in the whole of Arabia in the same was as the townsmen of any metropolis occupy a distinctive place in their country.

The language spoken at Makkah was regard as a model of unapproachable excellence: the Makkan dialect set the standard which the desert Bedouins as well as the Arabs of outlying areas strived to imitate. By virtue of their elegant expression and eloquence, the inhabitants of Makkah were considered to possess the finest tongue, uncorrupted by the grossness of the languages of non-Arabs. In their physical features, shapeliness and good looks, the people of Makkah were considered to be the

best representatives of the Arabian race. They were also endowed with the virtues of courage and magnanimity of heart, acclaimed by the Arabs as Al-Futuh and al-Murauwah, which were the two oft-repeated themes of Arabian poetry. These traits of their character admirably describe their recklessness which savored troth of a devil and a saint.

The matters that attracted their attention most were genealogy, legends of Arabia, poetry, astrology and planetary mansions, ominous flight of the birds and a little of medication. As expert horsemen, they possessed an intimate knowledge of the horse and preserved the memory of the purest breed; and as dwellers of the desert they were well-versed in the delicate art of physiognomy. Their therapy based partly on their own experience and partly on the traditional methods handed down to them from their forefathers, consisted of branding, phlebotomy, removal of diseased limbs and use of certain herbs.

MILITARY POWERS

The Quraysh were by nature or nurture, a peace-loving people, amiable in disposition; for, unlike all other peoples inside and outside the Peninsula, their prosperity depended on the development of free trade, continual movement of caravans, improvement of marketing facilities in their own city and maintenance of conditions peaceful enough to encourage merchants and pilgrims to bend their steps to Makkah. They were sufficiently

farsighted to recognize that their merchantile business was their life. Trade was the source of their livelihood as well as the means to increase their prestige as servants of the sanctuary. The Qur'aan has also referred to the fact in the Soorah Quraysh:

> **"So let them worship the Lord of this House, who hath fed them against hunger hath made safe from fear."** [Qur'aan 106:3-5]

In other words, they were inclined to avoid a scramble unless their tribal or religious honor was in peril. They were thus committed to the principle of peaceful coexistence; nevertheless, they possessed considerable military prowess. Their courage and intrepidity was as axiomatic throughout Arabia as was their skill in horsemanship. "**Al-Ghadbata al-Mudriyah**" or anger of the Mudar, which can be described as a tormenting thirst quenched by nothing save blood, was a well known adage of Arabic language frequently used by the poets and orators of pre-Islamic Arabia.

The military prowess of Quraysh was not restricted to their own tribal reserves alone. They utilized the services of ahabeesh or the desert Arabs living around Makkah, some of which traced their descent to Kinana and Khuzayma b. Mudrika the distant relation of Quraysh. The Khuza'a were also confederates of the Quraysh. In addition, Makkah had always had slaves in considerable numbers who were ever willing to fight for their masters. They could thus draft, at any time, several thousand

warriors under their banner. The strongest force numbering 10,000 combatants, ever mustered in the pre-Islamic era, was enlisted by the Quraysh in the battle of Ahzab.

MAKKAH, THE HEART OF ARABIA

By virtue of its being the seat of the national shrine and the most flourishing commercial centre whose inhabitants were culturally and intellectually in Arabia. It was considered a rival of Sana' in Yemen, but with the Abyssinians and Iranians gaining control over Sana, one after another, and the decline of the earlier glamour of Hira and Ghassan, Makkah had attained a place of undisputed supremacy in Arabia.

THE MORAL LIFE

A moral ideal was what the Makkans lacked most of all, or one can say, except for the binding force of some stale customs and traditional sentiments of Arab chivalry, they had no code of ethics to guide their conduct. Gambling was a favourite pastime in which they took pride, unrestrained drunkenness sent them into rapturous delight and immoderate dissipation satisfied their perverted sense of honor. Their gatherings were the scenes of drinking bouts and wanton debauchery without any idea of sin or crime; they never took any aversion to wickedness, iniquity, callousness and brigandage.

The moral atmosphere of Arabia in general and of Makkah in particular, was faithfully depicted by J'afar b. Abu Talib, a prominent member of the Quraysh, in the court of Negus, when he said to him;

"O King we were an unenlightened people plunged in ignorance: we worshipped idols, we ate dead animals, and we committed abominations; we broke natural ties, we ill-treated our neighbors and our strong devoured the weak." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p.336)

RELIGIOUS LIFE

The religious practices and beliefs of the Arabs were, beyond doubt, even more despicable, particularly, by reason of the influence they exerted on the social and moral life of the people. Having lost all but little touch with the salubrious teachings of the Prophets of old, they had been completely submerged in the crude and materialistic form of fetishism like that prevailing in the countries surrounding them. So fond had they become of idol worship that no less than three hundred and sixty deities adorned, or defiled, the holy sanctuary. The greatest amongst these gods was Hubal whom Abu Sufyan had extolled at the battle of Uhud when he had cried out: "Glory be to Hubal". The idol occupied a central place in the Ka'bah, by the side of a well in which the offerings were stored. Sculptured in the shape of a man, it was made of a huge cornelian rock. As its right hand was missing when the Quraysh had discovered it, they had

replaced it by a hand made of solid gold. Two idols had been placed in front of the Ka'bah, one was called Isaf and the other as Na'ila; the former had been installed close to the Ka'bah and the latter by the place of Zamzam. After sometime the Quraysh had shifted the first one near the other, where they offered up sacrifices besides them. On the mounts of Safa and Marwah, there were two more idols called Nahik Mujawid al-Rih and Mut'im at-Tayr.

Every household in Makkah had an idol which was worshipped by the inmates of the house. Al-'Uzza had been installed near 'Arafat within a temple constructed for it. Quraysh venerated al-'Uzza as the chief or the noblest of all deities. The Arabs used to cast lots with the help of divining arrows placed before these idols for taking a decision to commence any affair. There were also other idols, one of which named as al-Khalsa, had been set up in the depression of Makkah's valley. The idol was garlanded, presented an offering of barley and wheat and bathed with milk. The Arabs used to make sacrifices and hang the eggs of an ostrich over it. Being a popular deity, its replicas were sold by vendors to the villagers and pilgrims visiting Makkah.

The Arabs possessed the virtues of courage, loyalty and generosity, but during the long night of superstition and ignorance, worship of images and idols had stolen into their hearts, perhaps, more firmly than any other nation; and they had wandered far away from the simple faith of their ancestors Ibrahim and Isma'il which had once taught

them the true meaning of religious piety, purity of morals and seemliness of conduct.

So, this was the city of Makkah. Then by the middle of the sixth century of Christian era, before the birth of the Prophet (ﷺ), whence we see Islam rising on a horizon shrouded in obscure darkness.

In very truth the Lord has said:

> **That You may warn a folk whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless.** [Qur'aan 36:6]

In Makkah Early Life

ABDULLAH AND AMINA

'Abdul Muttalib, chieftain of the Quraysh, had ten sons who were all worthy and outstanding, but 'Abdullah was the noblest and most prominent among them. 'Abdul Muttalib wedded his son to Amina, the daughter of Wahb Ibn 'Abdu Munaf, who was the leading man of Bani Zuhra. She (Amina) was the most excellent woman among the Quraysh in birth and stature at that time. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 110)

Muhammed's father `Abdullah died before Muhammed was born. The Prophet (ﷺ) was born on Monday, the 12th of Rab'i-ul Awwal in the Year of the Elephant. Certainly, it was the most auspicious day in the history of mankind.

Muhammed was the son of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abdul Muttalib, Ibn Hashim, Ibn 'Abdul Munaf, Ibn Qusayy, Ibn Kilab, Ibn Murra, Ibn Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy, Ibn Ghalib, Ibn Fihr, Ibn Malik, Ibn al-Nadr, Ibn Kinana, Ibn Khusayma, Ibn Mudrika, Ibn Ilyas, Ibn Mudar Ibn Nizar Ibn Ma'add, Ibn 'Adnan.

The parentage of 'Adnan is further traced to Ismail the son of Ibrahim by Arab genealogists.

After the birth of Muhammed, Amina sent someone to inform his grandfather. He came, looked at the baby lovingly and took him to the Ka'bah where he praised Allah and prayed for the infant. 'Abdul Muttalib then

gave him the name Muhammed, which means, 'He who is praised'. The Arabs were surprised at the unfamiliar name given to the newborn babe by 'Abdul Muttalib. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 159-60)

THE SUCKLING PERIOD

Thuwaybah, a bondwoman of the Prophet's uncle Abu Lahab, suckled him momentarily for a few days while 'Abdul Muttalib continued to look for a wet-nurse to nurture his favorite grandson. It was customary in Makkah to place the suckling babies under the care of a desert tribeswoman, where the child grows up in the free, chivalrous air away from the cramp, contaminating atmosphere of the city, and learn the wholesome ways of the Bedouins. Those were the days when the chaste, unaffected and natural expression of the desert people was considered as the finest model of grace and elegance of the Arabic language. Together with the milk of a Bedouin woman, the babies imbibed the fluent language that flew across the desert.

The people from the tribe of Bani S'ad were known for the gracefulness of their speech. Halima S'adiya, a member of this tribe, ultimately came to have the precious baby under her wings. This was a year of famine wherein Bani S'ad had been rendered miserable. The tribe came to Makkah to look for children to be suckled, but no woman to whom the Prophet of God (ﷺ) was offered, agreed to take the child because none expected a goodly return for

nurturing or nursing an infant whose father was already dead. They said, "An orphan! What will his mother and grandfather give in return?" At first, Halima also declined the offer but suddenly she felt a craving for the baby. She had also failed to get a charge for her and, therefore, before going back home, she returned and finally took the baby back with her. Halima found before long that her household was blest with luck, her breasts overflowed with milk, the udders of her she-camel were full and everything seemed to bring forth happiness. The women of Halima's tribe now spread out the rumor: "Halima, you have certainly got a blessed child." They began to feel envious of her already.

Halima weaned the baby when he was two years old, for it is customary upon the foster-children to return to their respective families at such an age. Besides, the boy was also developing faster than the other children, and by the time he was two, he was already a well-grown child. Thus, Halima brought the Prophet of God (ﷺ) back to Amina but begged her to be allowed to keep the boy for some extended time as he had brought her luck. Amina agreed and allowed Halima to take Muhammed back with her.

Some months after his return to Bani S'ad, two angels seized the Prophet of God (ﷺ), opened up his chest and extracted a black drop from it. Then they thoroughly cleaned his heart and healed the wound after putting his heart back in its place.

Muhammed (ﷺ) tended the lambs with his foster-brothers in the boundless wilderness of the desert, far away from the pretensions, hypocrisy, pomp and pride of the city, rendering his thoughts dry and clear like the desert air. His life was as simple as the sand and he learned to endure with the hardships and dangers of the wilderness. And with the people of Bani S'ad, his ears became accustomed to the rhetoric and eloquence of the pure and classical language of the Bedouins. The Prophet (ﷺ) often used to tell his companions: "I am the most Arab of you all for I am of Quraysh origin and I was suckled among Bani S'ad Ibn Bakr. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, 167).

DEATH OF AMINA AND 'ABDUL MUTTALIB

When the Prophet (ﷺ) was six years old, his mother took him to Yathrib to pay a visit to her father. She also wanted to call on the grave of her late husband, but while on her way back to Makkah, she died at a place called Abwa. Muhammed (ﷺ) must have felt lonely and sorrowful at the death of his mother in the middle of his journey. Incidents of such nature had been a common fixture in his life since birth, perhaps as a divine dispensation for his upbringing in a particular way, one which is reminiscent of the great role that he has to play in the future. Finally, the Abyssinian bondwoman, Umm Ayman Barkah, brought him to his grandfather in Makkah. 'Abdul Muttalib loved Muhammed (ﷺ) so dearly, making him the apple of his eye and never allowed him to be distant from his sight.

When Muhammed was eight years of age, 'Abdul Muttalib also passed away. Muhammed (ﷺ) was now left behind, alone and abandoned. He had never seen his father, and would have had no recollection of him, but the death of the adoring grandfather must have been too depressing and inconsolable to bear.

ABU TALIB BECOMES THE GUARDIAN

Following the death of 'Abdul Muttalib, Abu Talib took the Prophet (ﷺ) under his care for he and 'Abdullah, the Prophet's father, were brothers by the same mother. Abdul Muttalib had also been insisting upon Abu Talib to take care of Muhammed (ﷺ) himself. Accordingly, Abu Talib took Muhammed (ﷺ) under his protection and even treated him with more care and affection than his own two sons, 'Ali J'afar and 'Aqil. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 179).

Once, when Muhammed (ﷺ) was nine years old, Abu Talib planned to go on a merchant caravan to Syria. Knowing this, Muhammed (ﷺ) approached his uncle, and nestling close to him, insisted on accompanying him in the journey. Abu Talib was moved and agreed to take Muhammed with him to Syria. When the caravan reached Busra in Syria, it broke the journey for a short stay and while there, they met a monk by the name of Buhaira who lived in his cell. He came out against his practice, to welcome the merchants and made a great feast for them. The caravan found favor with Buhaira, so they say, because of something that he had seen while he was in his

cell. When Buhaira saw Muhammed, he observed in him the signs of the Prophethood that he had known and advised Abu Talib: "Return to your home with this youth and guard him from the Jews; for great dignity awaits your nephew". Abu Talib immediately took Muhammed (ﷺ) back to Makkah by virtue of Buhaira's advice.

DIVINE TUTELAGE

God had made special arrangements for broadening the mind of Muhammed (ﷺ) and had taken particular care to shut off the faults and failures of the pagan past from him. Since early youth, the reserved and unassuming young man was known for his gentle disposition and grave purity of life as well as for his candidness, honesty and integrity and his stern sense of duty. His was the straight and narrow path and none could find the slightest fault with him. The fair character and honorable bearing of Muhammed (ﷺ) won for him, in the pinnacle of his youth, the title of Al-Amin, meaning the Trustworthy, from his fellow populace. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 183)

Evil were the ways of young men in Makkah, and no misconduct brought anybody into jeopardy or accountability. But God helped Muhammed (ﷺ) abandon the pleasures of life familiar to everybody in there. Such that on the contrary, he was rather kind to his kinsmen, alleviated the sufferings of others and spared or minimized expenses to meet their needs. Moreover, he entertained guests, was ever willing to join hands with

anybody who had a noble and virtuous task and preferred to earn his livelihood by toiling hard for it even if it meant living a simple life to the point of austerity.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) was around fourteen or fifteen years of age, the sacrilegious war, known as the Harb-ul-Fijar, broke out between the Quraysh and the tribe of Qays. Muhammed (ﷺ) was present at this event such that he picked up the arrows that the enemy had shot and gave them back to the Qurayshite fighters. This was to mark his first experience of military operations. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, 186)

Now that Muhammed (ﷺ) was coming into grips of his own life, he turned his attention to scouting a means of livelihood. Like other lads of his age, he took a shot at the tendering of sheep and goats. It was not deemed a disgraceful occupation in those days; rather, it helped one to be watchful, alert and quick, kind and considerate, besides allowing an opportunity to inhale the freedom of Arabian air and the power of its sand. More than that, it had been the convention of all the Prophets of old which complied with his future Prophetic task. The Prophet (ﷺ) after all used to say: **"Verily, there has been no Prophet (ﷺ) who has not tended the flocks of goats."** On being asked again whether he had also performed the work of a shepherd, the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed. "Yes I did."

Muhammed (ﷺ) was not completely new to the job for in his childhood days he used to accompany his foster-brothers in tending their flocks and herds. The reports in the Saheeh show that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to watch the

goats upon the neighboring hills and valleys for a meager payment from their owners.

MARRIAGE WITH KHADIJAH

Muhammed (ﷺ) married Khadijah (ﷺ) when he was twenty-five years of age. Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid, was noble and intelligent, wealthy and was respected for the quality and integrity of her heart. A widow whose age was then forty years, (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 189-90) her late husband was Abu Hala. She carried out on their business and like other merchants of Makkah she also used to hire men to transport her merchandise outside the country on a profit-sharing scheme. Khadijah was impressed with Muhammed's truthfulness, trustworthiness and honorable character when he traded her merchandise to Syria.

Although Khadijah had turned down several offers for her hand by some of the eminent chiefs of the Quraysh, she expressed her desire to marry Muhammed (ﷺ). Hamza, an uncle of Muhammed (ﷺ), conveyed the message to him for which he readily agreed. Abu Talib recited the wedding sermon and Muhammed (ﷺ), united in wedlock with Khadijah, commenced his marital career. All the offspring of the Prophet (ﷺ) except Ibrahim who died in infancy, were born to Khadijah.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KA'BA

In his thirty-fifth year, Muhammed (ﷺ) made a difficult decision about a matter that provoked the Quraysh and threatened to plunge them into another sacrilegious war. The Quraysh wished to rebuild the Ka'bah and furnish it with roofs, for it was made of loose stones, and its walls were only a little higher than a man's height. So, the walls were demolished and the work of reconstruction was taken up, but when it was time to rebuild the Ka'bah as far as the position of the Black Stone was concerned, the question arose as to who should place the sacred relic into its place. Every tribe claimed the honor; an imminent collision was bound to happen. The grounds that led to wars of attrition during the early days of paganism in Arabia were nothing but inferior or insignificant when compared to the grave issue that was made as the focal point of honor on this occasion.

Banu 'Abdul Dar brought a bowl full of blood; then they and Banu 'Adiy pledged themselves to fight unto death by thrusting their hands into the blood. The conflict appeared to be the starting point of a furious struggle which might have swallowed up the whole of Arabia in another of their oft-recurring wars. The dilemma continued for a few days until it was agreed that whosoever is the first man to enter the gate of the Kabah would be made as the umpire of the matter under dispute. And so the first man to enter came, but he was no other than the future Prophet of God (ﷺ). "This is Muhammed", they said as soon as they saw him

coming, and further added: "He is trustworthy and we will abide by his decision."

Muhammed (ﷺ) asked them to bring a cloth, took the Black Stone and put it inside the fabric, then afterwards asked each tribe to take hold of an end of the material and then simultaneously raise it to the required height. When the people lifted the stone in such manner, Muhammed (ﷺ) placed it in its position with his own hands, and the building went on above it. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 192-197)

The wisdom displayed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on this occasion, one which saved the Quraysh from measuring the might of their swords with that of the others, strikingly illustrates his sound judgment apart from divulging sparks of his genius. The incident foreshadowed the signs of Muhammed's prudence, profoundness of his teachings, his thoughtfulness, cool temper and the spirit of his friendliness and altruism; in fact the cardinal virtues of one who was to become the 'Mercy for the Worlds". These were the qualities through which the Prophet (ﷺ) transformed a people, unruly and ferocious, continuously at war amongst each other, into a closely-knit fraternity by proving and submitting himself as a Merciful Prophet (ﷺ) before them.

HILFUL-FUDUL

It was during this period that the Quraysh came to agree upon one of the noblest covenants made in which Muhammed (ﷺ) played a prominent part. It so happened

that a man from Zabid (A town in Yemen) came to sell his merchandise in Makkah. One of the Quraysh chieftains in the person of Al-As Ibn Wayel purchased the whole of it but paid nothing in return. Because of this, Zabid approached several influential Quraysh leaders but none of them agreed to confront Al-As Ibn Wayel. Having been turned down by those that he had previously asked for help, Zabid called upon the people of Makkah exhorting every bold and fair-minded young man to come to his rescue. At last, many of them, moved by embarrassment, assembled in the house of 'Abdullah Ibn Jad'an who entertained everyone that came to his house. Thereafter, they formed a pact, in the name of Allah, for repression of acts of lawlessness and restoration of justice to the weak and the oppressed within the walls of Makkah. The covenant was called Hilful-Fudul wherein all its members finally approached Al-As Ibn Wayel and forced him to return the merchandise of Zabid. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp.257-59).

Muhammed (ﷺ) had been one of the prominent movers of the pact and he always made it a point to express his satisfaction over the execution of this agreement. Once he remarked: "I had a hand in making such an arrangement in the house of 'Abdullah Ibn Jad'an to which if I were invited again to help even after the advent of Islam, I would have undoubtedly participated once more". Through such *Hilful Fudul*, they had agreed to restore upon everyone what is due of him and to protect the weak from the exploits and manipulations of the oppressors."

The Advent of Prophecy

UNREST

Muhammed (ﷺ) was approaching his fortieth year. He felt a mystifying internal unrest, yet he did not know the rationale behind it. He was himself not aware what the inexplicable confusion meant to him; nor did the idea that God was about to honor him with revelation and Prophethood ever crossed his mind. This was how the Prophet (ﷺ) felt, as has been attested by God in the Qur'an:

> **"And thus We have inspired in thee (Muhammed) a Spirit of Our Command. You knewest not what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith. But We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of our bondmen. And Lo! You verily dost guide unto a right path."** [Qur'aan 42:52]

At another place, the inability of the Prophet (ﷺ) to know the reason for his internal unrest has been demonstrated in these words:

> **"You hast no hope that the Scripture would be inspired in thee; but it is a mercy from Your Lord, so never be a helper to the disbelievers."** [Qur'aan 28:86]

It pleased the Will of God, All-wise and All-knowing, that His Prophet (ﷺ) should remain a stranger to the arts

of reading and writing. His contemporaries could thus never accuse him of himself editing the divine revelations. This, too, has been subverted by the Qur'an to settle the matter as evidenced by the following verse:

> **"And You (O Muhammed) was not a reader of any Scripture before it, nor didst You write it with Your right hand, for then might those have doubted, who follow falsehood."** [Qur'aan 29: 48]

That is why the Qur'an calls him an 'unlettered Prophet (ﷺ)'.

> **"Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the gospel (which are) with them—He commands them for *Al-Maruf* (monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbids them from *Al-Munkar* (disbelief and all that Islam forbids)"** [Qur'aan 7:157]

IN THE CAVE OF HIRA

Often Muhammed (ﷺ) preferred the solitude of Cave Hira where he remained for as many days as the provision with him required, spending his nights in vigils and prayers, in the manner he thought reminiscent of the way of Ibrahim (عليه السلام).

It was the 17th Ramadan/ 6th August, 610 AD of the year following the fortieth year of the Prophet (ﷺ). Muhammed

(ﷺ) was wide-awake and fully conscious when the Angel Gabriel came to him and said: “Read”. Muhammed (ﷺ) answered truthfully, “I cannot read.” The Prophet (ﷺ) related that the Angel took and pressed him until he was distressed, after which he released him and said again, “Read.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied for the second time, “I cannot read.” The Angel again pressed him tightly until he felt squeezed and then letting him go, said, “Read.” When the Prophet (ﷺ) replied once again, “I cannot read,” he took him and pressed tightly a third time in the same manner. He then let the Prophet (ﷺ) go and said:

> **Read (O Muhammed) in the name of Your Lord who createth,**
> **Createth man from a clot. Read: and Your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not.** [Qur'aan 96:1-5]

BACK HOME

Upset and frightened by the strange experience which had never occurred to him earlier or having not heard of the same prior incident, the Messenger of God (ﷺ) came back with verses, his heart trembling, and went to Khadijah and said: “Wrap me up, wrap me up!" for he still felt horrified.

Khadijah asked the reason for the Prophet's (ﷺ) restlessness and the latter told her what had happened. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was intelligent and prudent and had heard a great deal about the

messengers of God, Prophethood and angels from her cousin Waraqa Ibn Naufal (who had embraced Christianity and familiarized the Torah and Gospels). She was herself dissatisfied with the pagan cult of the Makkahns like several other enlightened ones who had broken away from the idol worship.

Khadijah was the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). She had spent many years with him as the closest companion and knew him like she knew herself. By that alliance, Khadijah became the most reliable and credible testament of the nobility of her husband's character. Worthiness of his moral fiber had convinced her that succor of the Lord would in any case stand by such a man. She knew in her heart of hearts that the good grace of God could never allow one so high-minded, truth-loving, trustworthy and upright man such as her husband, to be possessed by a jinn or a devil. And so she assured him with domineering self-confidence: **"By no means; I swear to God that He would never embarrass you. Because you consolidate and salvage relationships, you speak the truth, you bear peoples' burdens, you help the destitute, you entertain guests and you relieved the pain and grief suffered for the sake of truth."** (Mishkat al-Masabih, Vol. IV, p. 1253)

PREDICTION OF WARAQA IBN NAWFAL

Khadijah had tried to comfort and encourage her husband on account of what she thought was correct or on the basis of her own knowledge and understanding. But

the matter was serious, crucial and imperative. She had no peace of mind until she had consulted someone knowledgeable of the revealed religions, their history and scriptures, as well as the biography of the earlier Prophet's of God (ﷺ). Khadijah wished to know for sure what had befallen her husband.

Khadijah knew that Waraqa Ibn Naufal was the man who could clarify the matter. She took the Prophet (ﷺ) to Waraqa and when the Prophet (ﷺ) told him what he had seen and heard, Waraqa cried out, **"Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraqa's soul, Lo, You art the Prophet of this people. There hath come unto thee the greatest Namus, (Archangel Gabriel) who came unto Moses at his time. A day will come when You wilt be called a liar, Your people wilt maltreat thee, cast thee out and fight against thee."** The Prophet (ﷺ) was surprised to hear Waraqa's premonitions for his fellow citizens had always received him with courtesy and esteem. They addressed him as the trustworthy and honest. Holding his breath in amazement, he demanded from Waraqa, "What! Will they expel me?" "Yes", (replied) Waraqa, "For no man has ever brought anything like what You hast brought without being opposed and fought by his people, which hath always been so. If I live to see that day, I shall stand by thee."

The Prophet (ﷺ) waited, day after day, but no revelation came for a long time. Then, it began again, so the revelation of the Qur'an started to manifest itself little by

little and then in quick succession and was completed throughout the entire period of twenty-three years.

The First Muslims

KHADIJAH

Khadijah, the Prophet's wife, was the first believer in the new faith. She had the opportunity of being his companion and helper, his consort and supporter. She always stood behind him, consoling and giving him support against all those who denied and scorned him. She tried to relieve his apprehensions and encouraged him by reinforcing her trust in him.

'ALI IBN ABU TALIB AND ZAYD IBN HARITH

'Ali Ibn Abi Talib was the next to enter in the fold of Islam. He was then a youth of ten years, and had been brought up under the guardianship of the Prophet (ﷺ) since his early childhood. The Prophet (ﷺ) had taken the charge of 'Ali from his uncle Abu Talib, and kept him as a member of his family since the time a grievous famine befell Quraysh. The third person to accept Islam was Zayd Ibn Haritha who was a freeman of the Prophet (ﷺ) and whom he had adopted as his son).

ABU BAKR

Acceptance of the Prophet's faith by Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Quhafa, after Zayd, was of no minor significance. This merchant of sociable nature was known for his

moderation and prudence, good character and kindliness, and enjoyed a still greater reputation for his wide knowledge of the genealogy of the Quraysh and expertise in commerce. He began to preach the truth that he had affirmed himself to all those that he had relied upon including those who are associated with him or those who came to seek his company. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 249-59)

The persuasive businessman began to win over the elite of the Quraysh to place their trust in the mission of the Prophet (ﷺ). Those who accepted Islam at invitation of Abu Bakr included 'Uthman Ibn Affan, Zubayr Ibn Al 'Awwam, 'Abdul Rahman Ibn Auf, S'ad Ibn Abi Waqqa and Talha Ibn 'Ubaydullah. Abu Bakr brought all of them to the Prophet (ﷺ) upon whose hands they embraced Islam. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 150-51)

Slowly, the mission of the Prophet (ﷺ) was made known to other respectable citizens of Makkah and some of them who followed after the first eight were:

Abu 'Ubayda Ibn al-Jarrah, Al-Arqam, 'Uthman Ibn Maz'un, 'Ubaydah Ibn al-Harith Ibn Abdul Muttalib, Sa'id Ibn Zayd, Kahbbab Ibn Al-Aratt, 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'us, 'Ammar Ibn Yasir, Suhayb Ibn Sinan and others.

People now began to accept Islam in large numbers; they came in throngs from different tribes and families until the news spread throughout the city that Muhammed taught some sort of a new faith. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 262)

ON MOUNT SAFA

Three years had elapsed from the time the Prophet (ﷺ) had received the first revelation but he had remained a silent preacher throughout such period. He was now commanded to announce it openly:

> **"So proclaim that which You art commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters."** [Qur'aan 15: 94]

> **"And warn Your tribe of near kindred, and lower Your wing (in kindness) unto those believers who follow thee."** [Qur'aan 26:214-15]

> **"And say: Lo! I, even I, am a plain Warner."** [Qur'aan 15: 89]

It was an order to show himself to peoples of the world. The Prophet (ﷺ) ascended the heights of mount Safa and cried aloud: "Ya Sahabah". The Arabs were already familiar with the call, which was meant to summon them for facing a surprise attack by the enemy. The alarming call made the whole of the Quraysh come quickly round the Prophet (ﷺ) while those who were unable to come, sent proxies for themselves. Looking down at the men who waited with their eyes strained at him, the Messenger of God (ﷺ) said to them:

"O sons of 'Abdul Muttalib! O sons of Fihr: O sons of K'ab! If I tell you that horsemen were advancing to attack you from the other side of this hill, would you believe me?" The Arabs were practical-minded, possessing a keenly logical outlook, which admitted no ifs, or buts. They saw the man whom they had always found, on every occasion, candid, honest and dependable, standing on the summit, having a full view of both the sides of the hill. They had, on the other hand, the rear of the hill concealed from their sight. Given their intelligence and understanding, experience with the man addressing them and the entirety of their own sane and sound mind led them to only one conclusion. They unanimously replied, **"Oh yes, we would surely believe you."**

A COGENT ARGUMENT

Absolute truthfulness, credibility, or dependability of the Messenger of God (ﷺ) constitute the initial and the most essential factor for the acceptance of his mission. The question posed by the Prophet (ﷺ) was thus meant to obtain a confirmation of these qualities from his audience. Meriting their approval, he said to them, **"Well, I am a warner to you before a severe condemnation overtakes you."** The Prophets of God (عليهم السلام) are endowed with the knowledge of crude or austere realities that are neither perceptible nor acceptable in human parlance. The way the Prophet (ﷺ) had tried to explain to them the concept and essence of Prophethood was the most trenchant and

effective method that could have been employed for the purpose. This was certainly the easiest as well as the best method to convey an accurate impact and significance of Prophethood, wherein the allegorical mode of expressing such a complex reality was without parallel in the teachings of any other Prophet or founder of religion.

The words of the Prophet (ﷺ) so struck the Quraysh that they stood silent and still. Abu Lahab, at last, took courage and exclaimed,

"May you perish! Is it for this that you have brought us here?"

The Beginning of Persecution

The Prophet of God (ﷺ) preached Islam openly in the streets of Makkah, yet the Quraysh remained cool and indifferent to him; neither did they turn against him nor did they ever feel that their Religion was at stake. They did not even care to refute the Prophet (ﷺ) but when he started talking critically of their gods, they felt offended and decided to rebuke him. Muhammed (ﷺ) would have been at the mercy from the radicals of the merchant's republic of Makkah, but Abu Talib, the Prophet's (ﷺ) uncle, continued to treat him kindly and stood up in his defense. And, the Prophet (ﷺ), equally determined to actively propagate his new faith, continued to call the people to Islam. Nothing could stop the Prophet (ﷺ) from preaching the commands of his God, in the same way that nothing could also dissuade Abu Talib to waive his protection from the nephew he so loved more than his sons.

ABU TALIB'S ANXIETY

The Prophet (ﷺ) was now the much-talked about problem among the Quraysh. They conferred and consulted one another how to face the danger that the Prophet (ﷺ) with his sweet tongue portended before them. At last, the leading men of the Quraysh approached Abu Talib and said to him, "O Abu Talib, you are old and we

hold you in high esteem. We had asked you to restrain your nephew but you did nothing. By God, we cannot tolerate any longer that our fathers should be denounced, that we should be labeled ignoramuses and frivolous and our gods insulted. Either you must stop him or we will fight both of you, until one of us perishes." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 256-66)

The old leader of Makkah remained deep in thought, distressed at the rift with his people and their hostility but he was nither willing to desert his nephew surrender give him to his enemies. He went for the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "Son of my brother, your people came to me and threatened me with dire consequences if you continue to preach your religion. Spare my life and yours and do not impose on me a burden greater than I can bear." The Prophet (ﷺ) thought that his uncle was no longer willing to shield him, that he intended to give him up. He answered, "O my uncle, by God, if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, and ask me to abandon this course, I would not turn from it until God makes it victorious or I perish therein."

Tears flowed from the eyes of the Prophet (ﷺ). With a heavy heart, he got up to depart. But, Abu Talib could not bear to look at his nephew's sorrow. Before he had reached the threshold, Abu Talib cried out, "Come back, my nephew." And when he returned, Abu Talib said, "Go where you please and say what you will. By God, I will never deliver you to your enemies." (Ibn Hisham Vol. I. pp. 265-66)

PERSECUTION BEGINS

The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to preach the message of God as vigorously as before. The Makkans were now desperate of forcing Abu Talib to give up Muhammed (ﷺ) and there was nothing that they could do to stop him. Their anger swelled to such an extent that they started inciting the tribes against those who had accepted Islam but had nobody to protect them. Every tribe asserted itself on the Muslims amongst it; beating and putting them under chains, denying them food and water and forcing them to lie on the burning sand and under the scorching heat of Arabia's sun.

Bilal Ibn Rabah was a slave who had embraced Islam. Umaya Ibn Khalaf, his master, used to bring him out at noontime and throw him on his back into the hot sand. He ordered to place a great rock on the chest of Bilal and then he would say to him, "No, by God, you will lie here till you die or deny Muhammed and worship Al-Lat and Al-Uzza." Bilal endured the affliction, crying, "One, One".

Abu Bakr once saw Bilal (May Allah be pleased with him) being tortured by his master. Sensing the servant's conviction, he bought Bilal's freedom. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 317-18)

Ammar Ibn Yasir and his parents had accepted Islam. Bani Makhzum used to take them out in the full glare of the sun at the hottest part of the day and then take them to task for their faith. If the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by them, he used to advise them: "Patience, O family of Yasir,

patience. Your destination is Paradise." They endured all persecutions until 'Bani Makhzum killed Ammar's mother for she refused to renounce Islam. (Ibn Hisham Vol. Pp. 317-18)

Mus'ab Ibn 'Umyr was the most well dressed young man of Makkah. Mus'ab's mother, who possessed a handsome fortune, had brought him up in the life of luxury. He used to put on the costliest clothes perfumed with the best scent and always had his shoes imported from Hadramaut, then famous for manufacturing leather goods. The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have once remarked about him: "I had not seen any young man in Makkah more handsome and far well-dressed or who had been brought up with more grandeur and comfort than Mus'ab Ibn Umayr." He came to know that the Prophet (ﷺ) preached a new religion in the house of Arqam. 'Umayr's curiosity took him there but he came back as a true believer in Islam. He did not, however, declare his faith open and kept on meeting the Prophet (ﷺ) secretly. 'Uthman Ibn Talha once saw him performing the prayer and disclosed his secret to his mother and other tribesmen. The result was that he was seized and imprisoned, and remained in fetters until the Muslims first migrated to Abyssinia. When he returned from Abyssinia along with the other refugees, he was completely a changed man. His daintiness and elegance was relinquished in favor of such a rugged simplicity that his mother had to leave him alone instead of confronting him (Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. III, pp. 82; Isti'ab, Vol. I, pp. 288)

Scared of the hostile atmosphere then prevailing against the Muslims in Makkah, others had sought the protection of their friends who were still polytheists. One of them was 'Uthman Ibn Mazun who was under the protection of Walid Ibn Al-Mughira, but as he felt ashamed of being shielded by anyone other than God, he renounced the protection of the former. Shortly thereafter, he had a heated argument with a polytheist who slapped him so hard on his face that he lost an eye. Walid Ibn Al-Mughira was present during the incident afterwhich he told him:'Uthman, "By God, O son of my brother, your eye was secured against this injury and you were well-protected." "Nay, by God," replied 'Uthman Ibn Maz'un (ﷺ), "The eye that is still unhurt longs for what happened to the other for God's sake. O 'Abdu Shams, I am here in the vicinity and shelter of one who is exceedingly superior to you in honor and glory." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 370-71)

When 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan accepted Islam, his uncle Hakam Ibn Abi al-As Ibn Umayya tied him securely with a rope and said, "Have you renounced the faith of your fathers for a new religion? By God, I will not release you until you abandon this belief." 'Uthman (ﷺ) firmly replied, "By God, I will never give it up." The firmness of 'Uthman (ﷺ) in his conviction ultimately led Hakam to unshackle him." (Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. III, P. 37)

Kahbbab Ibn Al-Aratt, a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), related his own story: "Some louts of the-Quraysh came one day and seized me. Then they kindled a fire and dragged me into it, while a man kept me down by

stomping on my chest." Khabbab then bared his back which had white leprous-looking spots. (Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd, Vol. III, 117)

ILL TREATMENT OF THE PROPHET BY HIS PEOPLE

The efforts of the Quraysh to seduce the Prophet's companions from their religion failed miserably, nor did they succeed in stopping the Prophet (ﷺ) from preaching his religion fearlessly. The Qurayshites were first annoyed and agitated, and then dismayed by the expanding community of Muslims, they stirred up against him, calling him a liar, a sorcerer, a segregator and a poet; they insulted and abused him and started harassing him in every respect.

Once, when they were assembled at the Ka`bah, the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived. The Qurayshites assailed him in unison. While they mobbed him thus, one of them pulled the sheet of cloth hanging round his neck, which nearly choked his throat. Abu Bakr, who happened to be present at that time, separated them from the Prophet (ﷺ) by thrusting himself in between them. And with tears in his eyes he cried, "Would you kill a man simply because he acknowledges that Allah is his Lord?" Hearing this, they shunned the Prophet (ﷺ) but fell upon Abu Bakr dragging him by his hair and beard.

At another time, the Prophet (ﷺ) even had to face a worse ordeal throughout the whole day. Whomsoever he

met, whether freeman or slave, cursed or vilified, or tried to hurt him in any way. He returned to his house and wrapped himself up because of the torments he had to endure that day. Then it was that God revealed to him the opening verse of the Chapter "The Enshrouded One" - 'O You wrapped up in Your cloak, Arise and warn." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 289-91 and Al-Bukhaari).

SUFFERINGS OF ABU BAKR

One morning Abu Bakr made a bold move to invite a gathering of the heathens to the true faith in God and His Prophet (ﷺ) but they fell upon him furiously and beat him mercilessly. 'Utba Ibn Rabia inflicted such severe injuries to his face with a pair of shoes that one could no longer distinguish the eyes from the nose of his swollen face.

Abu Bakr fell unconscious and was brought to his house by Banu Taym, his kinsmen, in a precarious condition, his life hanging by a thread. He regained consciousness late in the afternoon, but even then, the first thing he asked was whether the Prophet (ﷺ) was well and safe! His relations with the Prophet (ﷺ) endangered him for his concern for the Prophet (ﷺ), on whose account he had to suffer so grievously. Then, hardly raising his voice, he repeated his question to Umm Jamil, who had also accepted Islam. Umm Jamil motioned towards his mother who was standing near her, but Abu Bakr insisted on knowing about the Prophet (ﷺ), saying that there was no harm on telling him in her presence. At last, Umm Jamil told him

that the Prophet (ﷺ) was fine, but Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) would not be satisfied until he had himself seen the Prophet (ﷺ).

He said, "I have taken a vow that I would not take anything until I have seen the Prophet (ﷺ) myself." The two women waited until everybody had departed and then they brought Abu Bakr to the Prophet (ﷺ) who was moved to see his pitiable condition. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for his mother and invited her to accept Islam. It is reported that she readily pledged her trust in the Prophet (ﷺ) of God. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. I, pp. 439-41)

Quraish in a fix

As the enmity of persecutors increased, so did the number of the Prophet's followers. The Quraysh were baffled about how they were going to stop the people from taking the Prophet (ﷺ) and his teachings seriously. Makkah was a commercial center frequented by tribes people from far and near and during the Hajj, or when it is about to draw near, a plethora of them were to come again. The people coming to Makkah had somehow to be kept at a distance from the Prophet (ﷺ), lest they should hear his sermons and digest his words, or that they may contemplate or reflect and meditate upon them.

They went to Walid Ibn Al-Mughira, who was old and a man of standing, to seek his advice. He said, **"O people of Quraysh, the time of Hajj has come around when delegations of the Arabs will come here. They have all heard about this man, so agree upon a common ground hence you do not contradict one another and each one of you says the same thing."** Different suggestions were put forward but Walid was not satisfied. At last, he was asked to suggest some way out. Thereupon he said, **"The most convincing thing in my opinion would be that all of you present him as a sorcerer. You should say that he has brought a message through which he creates a rift between fathers and sons, or where brothers fall out from brothers, as well as husbands part ways with their wives and that families break up under his influence."**

The Quraysh came back to the shenanigan suggested by Walid. They sat when the time of Hajj commenced, warning everyone to keep clear of Muhammed, repeating what they had already agreed upon each other. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 270)

CRUELTY OF THE QURAYSH

The persecutors of the Prophet (ﷺ) were consumed by a rancor disregard for every consideration of humanitarianism and kinship; their torture was embittered by the refinements of cruelty and their misbehavior and rudeness was helpless and ineffective enough to pollute the sacred asylum held as the holiest sanctum by the Arabs.

One day while the Prophet (ﷺ) was praying at the Ka'bah, a company of the Quraysh occupied their places in the sanctuary. ‘Utba Ibn Abu Mu’ayt brought the fetus of a camel from somewhere and when the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated in prayer, he laid it on his back and shoulders. The Messenger of God (ﷺ) remained in prostration until his daughter Fatima (May Allah be pleased with her) came running and threw it off him. She called down evil upon the one who had done it and the Prophet (ﷺ) also joined her in the condemnation. (Al-Bukhaari)

HAMZA ACCEPTS ISLAM

Once, Abu Jahl happened to pass by the Prophet (ﷺ) near the mount of Safa. He insulted the Prophet (ﷺ) and heaped all manners of indignities upon him but the Prophet (ﷺ) of God did not mind at all. After a little while, Hamza returned from a hunting spree with his bow hanging by his shoulder. Hamza was essentially a warrior, the bravest and the most courageous amongst the Quraysh. A slave woman belonging to 'Abdullah Ibn Jad'an told him what had happened to his nephew. Hamza angrily turned back to the holy Mosque where Abu Jahl was sitting with his friends. Going straight to Abu Jahl, Hamza proceeded to strike his bow upon his head, saying, "Would you dare to insult and abuse him when I follow his religion and say what he says?" Abu Jahl kept quite while Hamza, returning to his nephew, declared himself a convert to Islam. The Quraysh were put to a great loss by the conversion of a man of unquestionable character and legendary courage. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 291-92)

PROPOSAL OF 'UTBA TO THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

The number of the Prophet's followers increased daily, threatening to turn the tide against Quraysh who as a tribe, chose to stay at the other end of the spiritual spectrum and therefore, took the situation as highly embarrassing. But they were unable to do anything to alter the course of Islam. 'Utba Ibn Rabia, the old and wise

aristocrat of the Quraysh realized that he must find a way to patch up the differences with the Prophet (ﷺ). He consulted the Quraysh for some concessions with him so that he might give up his mission. The Quraysh felt that it was a workable proposition and allowed 'Utba to negotiate with the Prophet (ﷺ) on their behalf.

'Utbah went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and sat by his side. Then he said, "O my nephew, you know the worthy position you enjoy among us. But you have created a rift in your people by ridiculing them, insulting their gods as well as their religion, declaring their forefathers as heathens and denying their customs. Now, listen to me, I will offer you some proposals that will hopefully include one which will merit your acceptability."

"O Abu Walid," replied the Prophet (ﷺ), "Go on, I am listening."

'Utbah continued, "My Nephew, if you want to have wealth by what you preach, we will collect enough of it that you will be the richest of us. If you desire honor, we will make you our chief and leave every decision to your choice. If you aspire for kingship, we will recognize you as our monarch. And if you are possessed of a ghost or a jinn for which you have no remedy, we will find a competent physician for you and spend our wealth lavishly until your health is completely restored."

The Prophet (ﷺ) listened patiently. When 'Utbah had finished talking, he asked him, "Is it all that you have to say?" to which 'Utba replied "Yes".

"Now listen to me," said the Prophet (ﷺ). "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, and he continued to recite Soorah Fussilat, (Soorah 41, Chap. 'They are expounded') ending the recitation at prostration, (Verse 37) putting his hands behind him and leaning on them. The recitation ended, the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated and then said to 'Utbah, "Abul Walid, you have heard everything, now it is for you to decide."

As the Quraysh saw 'Utbah returning, they commented; "Honestly, he comes with an altered expression of his face." And, when he finally came, they asked him what had happened.

"I have heard a discourse the like of which I had never heard before. I'll swear to God, O Quraysh, that it is neither poetry, nor spell, nor witchcraft. Take my advice and leave this man alone." The Quraysh berated 'Utba. He said, "Now you may do whatever you think fit." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 293-94)

Muslims Migrate to Abyssina

The Prophet (ﷺ) saw his followers standing up to their convictions in spite of persecutions, and his heart was laden with grief. And since he could do nothing to protect them, he advised his followers to migrate to the country of the Christian ruler, Negus of Abyssinia, who was reputed to be just and kindhearted. It was a friendly country, said the Prophet (ﷺ), where the Muslims could stay until such time as God relieved them of their distress.

Thereupon, ten Muslims left Makkah for Abyssinia. This was the first migration in Islam, where 'Uthman Ibn Maz'un was elected as the leader of this first batch of emigrants. After them J'afar Ibn Abi Talib departed from Makkah, then a number of Muslims followed suit, one after another; some went alone while others took their families with them. A total of eighty-three persons are reported to have fled to Abyssinia. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. Pp. 320-21)

QURAYSH PURSUE THE MUSLIMS

The news that the Muslims were living in peace in Abyssinia reached Makkah making the Qurayshites all the more restless depressed and discouraged. So they decided to send 'Abdullah Ibn Abu Rabia and 'Amr Ibn Al 'As Ibn Wail as their emissaries, laden with choicest presents of Makkah for Negus, his nobles and chiefs, to get the persons in exile back from Abyssinia. The agents of the

Quraysh first bribed the courtiers of Negus with their presents to espouse their cause before the king, then they presented their gifts to him and said:

"Some foolish young men of our tribe have taken refuge in Your Majesty's country. They have abandoned their own religion but neither accepted yours, and have invented a new faith which neither of us know. Our nobles, (who are their elders and guardians) have sent us to Your Majesty so we could get them back from you, for they are closer to them and that they know their faults."

The bodyguards of Negus who heard this whispered to him in chorus, "They are correct, surrender the refugees to them". But king Negus was enraged; he disliked forsaking those who had sought his shelter." He said, "No, by God, I will not surrender them". Thereafter, he summoned the Muslims to his court in the presence of his bishops, and asked the Muslims: "What is that religion for which you have forsaken your people and neither accepted my religion nor any other?"

J'AFAR'S PORTRAYAL OF ISLAM

J'afar Ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ), then rose to explain what the King had asked. He said:

"O King, we were an unenlightened people plunged in ignorance. We worshipped idols, we ate dead animals, and we committed abominations: we broke natural ties, we mistreated our neighbors and our strong exploited

the weak. We thus lived that way, until God raised among us an Prophet (ﷺ), of whose noble birth and lineage, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware. He invited us to acknowledge the Unity of God and to worship Him, and to renounce the stones and idols our forefathers and we ourselves used to venerate. He enjoined us to speak the truth, to redeem our pledges, to be kind and considerate to our kin and neighbors; he forbade us to refrain from every vice, bloodshed, shamelessness, lies and deceit and asked us neither to encroach upon the substance of orphans nor to vilify chaste women. He commanded us to pay divine homage to Allah alone and never associate ought with Him; he ordered us to pay the poor-due, to observe fast (thus enumerating other injunctions of Islam). We acknowledged his truthfulness and believed in him; we followed him in whatever he brought from God and we worshipped only One God without associating ought with Him; we treated as unlawful what he prohibited and accepted what he made lawful for us. From then on, we were estranged from our own people such that they persecuted us, tried to seduce us from our faith and forced us to take back our idols for our God and they compelled us to return to the abominations we used to commit earlier. So when they tortured and held us under their tyranny and stood between us and our religion, we fled to your country, having chosen you above others for our refuge. We have come here, O King, to your land

seeking your protection and we do hope that we shall not be dealt with unjustly."

Negus listened patiently to J'afar Ibn Abi Talib (ﷺ). Then he asked J'afar if he had something brought by his Prophet (ﷺ) from God.

J'afar replied in the affirmative. Negus asked him to recite the same. Thereupon J'afar recited the opening verses of Soorah Maryam. (19th Chapter, "Mary") Negus wept until his beard was wet, as the bishops sobbed until their scrolls were moistened with their tears, too.

DISCOMFITURE OF THE QURAYSHITE EMISSARIES

"Truly, this and what Jesus brought are traditions from the same Heavenly light", said Negus. Then turning to the envoys of the Quraysh he continued, **"You may go. By God, I shall never give them up to you."**

Now, the shrewd poet 'Amr Ibn al-'As hurled his last shot and what a deadly tirade at that for he said, **"O King, they assert a dreadful thing about Jesus which is even unwholesome to repeat before thee."**

Negus demanded from J'afar , **"What do you say about Jesus?"**

J'afar Ibn Abi Talib replied, **"We say about which our Prophet (ﷺ) has taught us. He was a creature of God and His Prophet (ﷺ), as well as His Spirit and His Word, which was cast unto the blessed Virgin Maryam."**

Negus took a straw from the ground and said, **"By God, Jesus, son of Mary, does not exceed what you have said by the length of this straw."**

Negus treated the Muslims with honor and pledged his protection to them. Both crestfallen envoys of the Quraysh had to leave Abyssinia in great shame while the Muslims lived there in peace and security. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 334-38)

Umar Embraces Islam

Islam was then further strengthened by the conversion of 'Umar to the truth as brought about by the Prophet of God (ﷺ).

'Umar was one of the nobles of the Quraysh, broad-shouldered, tall and brave. He was feared and respected by all. How the Prophet (ﷺ) wished that he should accept Islam, as he often prayed to God for showing him the right path.

Fatima bint al-Khattab, the sister of 'Umar, accepted Islam and shortly thereafter, her husband Sa'id Ibn Zayd followed suit. But both kept it a closely guarded secret since they feared the violent inclination of 'Umar's nature. They knew that 'Umar was a zealous adherent of his forefathers' religion and carried a bitter aversion to the new faith in his bosom. Khabbab Ibn Aratt secretly taught the Qur'an to Fatima bint al-Khattab after her conversion.

'Umar planned to murder the Prophet (ﷺ). One day he sallied forth, with a sword hanging from his neck to find out the house near as-Safa where the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were reported to have assembled. Nu'aym Ibn 'Abdullah, who belonged to 'Umar's tribe of Bani 'Adiy and who had already acknowledged faith in the Prophet (ﷺ), happened to see 'Umar along the way armed and fiercely agitated. He asked, "Umar, where are you going?"

"I seek for Muhammed," was 'Umar's reply, "And I will slay him; he has forsaken our religion, shattered the unity of the Quraysh; ridiculed them and vilified their gods. Today I will settle the matter once and for all."

"Anger has blinded you," retorted Nu'aym, "Would it not be better to set your own family in order?"

'Umar was taken aback. He asked, "And who are they in my family?"

Nu'aym replied, "Your brother-in-law and cousin Sa-id Ibn Zayd and your sister Fatima. They have given faith to Muhammed and accepted his religion. Better deal with them first."

'Umar immediately hurried on to the house of his sister. Khabbab was at that time reading the Soorah Ta Ha (20th Chapter of the Qur'an) to the couple from a manuscript he had with him. When they caught the footsteps of 'Umar, Khabbab hid himself inside a small room whereas Fatima instantly concealed the manuscript beneath her thigh. But as 'Umar had already heard Khabbab reciting the scripture, he demanded on entering the house, "What was this nonsense murmur that I heard?'

"Nothing", both answered, but "What have you heard?"

"Yes, I accidentally discovered," continued 'Umar angrily. "I know that both of you have joined the sect of Muhammed." With these words, 'Umar threw himself upon his brother-in-law. Fatima rushed in to save her husband, but 'Umar struck her hard and wounded her.

All this happened abruptly, but now, both husband and wife boldly and openly asserted: “Yes, we are Muslims; we believed in Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ); do whatever you will.”

‘Umar saw the blood flowing from the wound he had inflicted on his sister; his anger gave in to shame coupled with admiration for his sister's courage. Cooled down, he asked for the manuscript that he had heard Khabbab reading. He said “Show me the manuscript. I want to know what Muhammed has brought.” In reality, ‘Umar knew the art of reading and writing.

Fatima, however, replied, “I fear what you might do with it.”

“Umar promised, with solemn assurance, not to destroy it. Fatima, too, thought that he might change his views after reading the scripture. She said to him politely but firmly, “My brother, you are unclean because of your polytheism, and only the pure can touch it.” ‘Umar rose and took a bath. His sister then gave him the pages on which Soorah Ta Ha was written. He had read only a few lines when he exclaimed in amazement,

“How noble and sublime is this speech!”

Thereupon Khabbab came out of his concealment and said, “O ‘Umar, by God, I hope that Allah would bless you with His Prophet's (ﷺ) call; for I heard him just last night imploring earnestly; "O Allah, strengthen Islam by Abul Hakam (Abu Jahl) or ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab. Now, ‘Umar have some fear of God.”

'Umar asked Khabbab to lead him to the Prophet (ﷺ) so that he might accept Islam. On being told by Khabbab that the Prophet (ﷺ) was in a house at as-Safa with his companions, 'Umar immediately took his sword and headed for him. When 'Umar knocked at the door indicated by Khabbab, one of the companions got up through a chink in the door to be sure of the person. Seeing 'Umar with his sword on, he hurried back, appalled, to report, "Prophet of Allah! 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab is here armed with his sword."

Hamza intervened to say, "Let him in. If he comes with a peaceful intent, then it is alright, but if not, therewith we will kill him with his own sword." The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the companion to open the door for 'Umar to enter and thus join them.

As 'Umar entered through the door, the Prophet (ﷺ) went forth to meet him in the room. He seized his cloak and pulling it rather firmly, said to him, "What for have you come, O son of Khattab? By God, I see that some calamity is to befall you before you have the final summons."

But 'Umar replied submissively, "O Messenger of Allah! I have come to attest my faith in Allah and His Prophet and what he has brought from God."

The Prophet (ﷺ) raised the cry of Allah-O-Akbar so loudly that all the companions present in the house came to know that 'Umar had just accepted Islam (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 342-46).

'Umar's conversion was a turning point in the fortunes of Islam as it made Muslims feel all the more confident and strengthened. Hamza had already accepted Islam beforehand, and now with 'Umar's conversion, the Muslims knew that it was likely to send the Quraysh in jitters. They were particularly embittered on learning of 'Umar's conversion. The Muslims were thus right in their reckoning for none of those who had embraced Islam in the past made such a stir nor created such a tense excitement and impact as did that of 'Umar's.

'Umar proclaimed his faith publicly. As soon as the Quraysh came know about, they drew the sword against him but found the same person prepared to take the course. Ultimately, with his inherent might, the people who valued their lives did not dare put up a clash with 'Umar but decided rather to keep their hands off him. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 349)

Boycott of Bani Hashim

The spread of Islam among the tribes further aggravated the resentment of the Quraysh. They came together and decided to draw up a decree ostracizing Bani Hashim and Bani ‘Abdul Muttalib. It was decided that nobody should marry the women of these two clans nor give their women to them in marriage; neither should they buy from nor sell to them. Having solemnly agreed to these points, the agreement was put into writing and the parchment was hung in the Ka'bah in order to give it a religious sanction thereby making it mandatory for all.

THE VALLEY OF SH’EB ABI TALIB

Bani Hashim and Bani Abdul Muttalib joined Abu Talib after the boycott was enforced and withdrew to a narrow glen or wadi known as Sh’eb Abi Talib. It was the seventh year of the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission. Abu Lahab Ibn ‘Abdul Muttalib, however, decided to join with the Quraysh, leaving his kith and kin covered by the ban.

Weeks and months had passed, and the people of Hashim lived in misery and hunger. The ban was so rigorously enforced that the Prophet's (ﷺ) clan was reduced to eating acacia leaves and the cries of hungry children reverberated all over the valley. The caravans passed peacefully through the streets of Makkah but the Quraysh told the merchants not to buy from or sell

anything to the two forsaken clans. This resulted to the prices being pegged so high that it was extremely impossible for the beleaguered people to purchase even their basic necessities.

The decree of proscription lasted for three years and for the same number of years Bani Hashim and Bani ‘Abdul Muttalib lived in exile and endured the hardships of a blockade. But not all Quraysh people were utterly humiliated and deprived. Those of them who were good-natured and kindhearted occasionally supplied food secretly to those who are in exile. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) never ceased preaching the message he had brought to his own people and even towards others, whenever he got the opportunity. Bani Hashim on their part endured every trouble with exemplary patience and fortitude.

ANNULMENT OF THE DECREE

The pitiable condition of the exiles gave rise to a feeling of resentment against the ban confronting the gracious and genial sons of the desert. Hisham Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Rabi’a took the initiative to end the boycott. He was amiable and kindhearted, as well as highly esteemed by the Quraysh. He approached some other considerate and well-disposed persons and put them to shame for allowing tyranny to linger on. At last, Hisham, supported by four other persons agreed to stand together till the decree of boycott was cancelled. Then, when the Quraysh had assembled in the sanctuary, Zuhayr whose mother ‘Atika was daughter

of ‘Abdul Muttalib, cried out to the people, “O ye people of Makkah, shall we eat and drink while Bani Hashim should die of hunger, unable even to buy or sell? By God I will not take rest until this cruel and unjust decree is torn into pieces.”

Abu Jahl tried to intervene but found everybody against him. Mut’im Ibn ‘Adiy then went up to tear the document into pieces but discovered that with the exception of the words “In Your Name, O Allah” the rest of the document had already been eaten up by white ants. The Prophet (ﷺ) had already told his uncle, Abu Talib, that God has given the white ants power over the document.

The blighted document was, however, taken out and thrown away and thus ended the boycott and everything that was written on it. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 350-51)

Lessons to be Learned from this Period of History:

Muhammed was neither seeking Prophethood nor was he dreaming about it. Allah used to inspire his heart to seek seclusion in order to worship and purify his soul, and to prepare his spirit to carry out the duties of the message. If Allah's Messenger was seeking for it, he would not have been frightened when it came to him. When Muhammed came from the mountain in order to ask Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) about the incident, which took place in the cave, he was not assured that he was a Messenger until he saw Gabriel and heard him say, "O Muhammed, you are Allah's Messenger and I am Gabriel."

Waraqah ibn Naufal and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) assured him that what he saw in the cave was the same revelation as that which came to Moses.

Allah's Messenger surprised the Arabs with something unfamiliar, thus they objected to it vehemently. Their primary concern was to put an end to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions. This is a historical refutation to those who claim that Muhammed was a preacher of nationalism and that he represented the hopes and aspirations of the Arabs at that time. This is a ridiculous claim because the historical events belie this notion, as we have witnessed. Those who made such remarks were simply biased in their nationalistic views and this led them to claim that Islam was a matter that originated from the Arabs and their thought. This is a clear denial of the prophecy of the Messenger and an insult to the message of Islam.

The phrase, which the Prophet (ﷺ) uttered to his uncle and his rejection of the offer of the Quraysh, is evidence that the Prophet (ﷺ) was truthful in his proclamation of Allah's message and his desire to guide the people to the straight path. In the same way, the caller must be persistent and determined with their call no matter how gravely the wrongdoers oppose them. They must turn away from their temptations of honor and positions because the adversities disputing the path of truth should bring comfort to their consciences and hearts. Furthermore, Allah's pleasure and His Paradise should be more valuable to them than the entire honor, positions, and wealth combined in this world.

The order of the Messenger (ﷺ) to his companions (May Allah be pleased with them) concerning the first and second emigrations to Christian Abyssinia is an indication that the ties among religious people, even if their religions are different, are stronger and more reliable than their attachment those bereft of religious sensibilities. The revealed religions, in their authentic and agreed upon sources and principles, adhere to the greater social objectives in the same way that they are in agreement concerning belief in Allah, His Messengers and the Last Day. This makes the relation between them stronger than any bond based on family ties, blood or country with those who have no God-consiousness.

The Year of Grief

DEATH OF ABU TALIB AND KHADIJAH

Soon after the end of the boycott, in the tenth year of his mission, the Prophet (ﷺ) lost his uncle, Abu Talib and his loving wife, Khadijah. Both were his protectors, tried and true helpers and devotedly attached to him. Their deaths meant a great loss to the Prophet (ﷺ) who at that time was already destined to encounter as many adversities in succession soon thereafter.

SPARKLING ELOQUENCE OF THE QUR'AN

Tufayl Ibn 'Amr al-Daust was a prominent poet honored by the Arabs. When he came to Makkah, some of the Quraysh warned him against meeting the Prophet (ﷺ). They told him, as usual, that Muhammed had created dissension among the Quraysh and so he had to be careful lest he should also fall under the Prophet's evil spell. Tufayl relates: "By God, they were so insistent that I decided not to listen or speak to him. I went as far as to stuff cotton in my ears before going to the holy mosque. Accidentally, my eyes captured the Prophet who was offering prayer near me. I stood by his side and thus God caused me to hear something of his speech. It was beautiful and noble. I thought, that my mother might curse me, for I am a poet and the connoisseur for nothing good or evil in a speech can elude me. Why should

anything prevent me from listening to his speech? If it is good, then I shall accept it, but if contrarily bad, I shall reject it."

He met the Prophet (ﷺ) at his house where he invited him to accept Islam and recited the Qur'an to him. Tufayl embraced Islam and went back to his tribe determined to preach the faith of God. He refused to do anything with his household members until they had also acknowledged God and His Prophet (ﷺ). All of them became Muslims and Islam spread thereafter in the tribe of Daus. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 382-384)

Abu Bakr used to pray within his house. Not being satisfied with it, he further selected a place in the courtyard of his residence where he started offering prayers and reciting the Qur'an. Abu Bakr was tenderhearted and when he recited the Qur'an, shedding tears all the while, youths, slaves and women used to gather around him listening to his recitation. Now, the Qurayshite chiefs got alarmed at Abu Bakr's open recital of the Qur'an so he sent for Ibn al-Dughunna who had pledged protection for him. When Ibn al Dughunna came, they said to him, "We accepted your pledge of protection for Abu Bakr on the condition that he prays inside his house but he has started praying and reciting in the open. We fear he might seduce our women and children. Now, if he agrees to offer his prayers secretly within his house, it is well and good, otherwise he should avert your protection. We neither want to make you break your word nor can we allow him to do it openly."

Ibn al-Dughunna informed Abu Bakr of what he had been told by the Quraysh, but he replied, "I renounce your guardianship; I am contented with the protection and custody of my Lord." (Al-Bukhaari, On the authority of 'Aisha, Chapter. Hijrah.)

Journey to Taif

The death of Abu Talib signaled the beginning of a difficult period for the Prophet (ﷺ). None of the Qurayshites dared touch the Prophet (ﷺ) during the lifetime of Abu Talib, but now the restraint was gone. In one instance, dust was thrown over his head. And to make matters far worse, the Quraysh, moved by the desire to impose themselves upon the Prophet (ﷺ), insulted and mocked at him and made caustic remarks on Islam. When the pagans persisted with their mockery and sarcasm as well as resolute behavior, the Prophet (ﷺ) thought of going to Ta'if to seek the help of the tribe of Thaqif. The Prophet (ﷺ) intended to invite them to Islam for he believed that they would receive his message with sympathy. His expectation was apparently well grounded as he had spent his childhood with Bani S'ad who were settled near Ta'if.

Ta'if was a delightful city, second only to Makkah in its population and prosperity, holding an important position in the Peninsula as alluded to in this verse of the Qur'an.

> **"And they say: If only this Qur'an had been revealed to some great man of the two towns?"** (meaning: Makkah and Ta'if) [Qur'an (43:31)]

Taif was also a religious center since pilgrims from every part of the country visit its so-called "Temple of al-Lat"

and thus, it competed with Makkah in such respect for the latter housed Hubal, the chief deity of Arabia. Ta'if was, as it still is today, the summer resort of the Makkan aristocracy. An Umayyad poet, 'Umar Ibn Rabi'a said about his beloved:

"Winter in Makkah, living in clover, In Ta'if she spends the summer."

The inhabitants of Ta'if, endowed with diversified large farms and vineyards, were wealthy and prosperous. They had become conceited and boastful embodying the following description of the Qur'anic verse:

> **"And we sent not unto any township a Warner, but it's pampered ones declared: Lo! we are disbeliever's in that which ye bring unto us. And they say: We are more (than you) in wealth and children. We are not the punished!"** [Qur'an (35:34-5)]

In Taif, the Prophet (ﷺ) first met the chiefs and leaders of Thaqif whom he invited to accept Islam. They were, however, rude and discourteous in their treatment of the Prophet (ﷺ). Not being content with their insolent reply, they even stirred up some gangs of the town to harass him. These riff-raffs followed the Prophet (ﷺ), abusing and crying and throwing stones on him, until he was compelled to take refuge in an orchard. The Prophet (ﷺ) consequently had to endure even more obstacles in Ta'if than he had to face in Makkah. These ruffians, based on

either side of the path, threw stones at him until his feet were injured and smeared with blood. These oppressions grievously dejected the Prophet (ﷺ), whereby being in such a state of depression, a prayer citing his helplessness and pitiable condition and seeking the aid of God spontaneously came thru his lips:

"O Allah", said the Prophet (ﷺ), **"To Thee I complain of my weakness, resourcelessness and humiliation before the people. You art the Most Merciful, the Lord of the weak and my Master. To whom wilt You confide me? To one estranged, bearing ill will, or, an enemy given power over me? If You art not worth on me, I care not, for Your favor is abundant upon me. I seek refuge in the light of Your countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and every affair of this world and the next is set right, lest Your anger should descend upon me or Your displeasure light upon me. I need only Your pleasure and satisfaction for only You enablest me to do good and evade the evil. There is no power and no might save in thee."**

The Lord then sent the angel of mountains who sought the Prophets (ﷺ) permission to join together the two hills between which Ta'if was located but the Messenger of God (ﷺ) replied, "No, I hope God will bring forth from their loins people who will worship God alone, associating nothing with Him." (Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad).

Moved to compassion by the grief of the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Utbah and Shayba Ibn Rabi'a sent for 'Addas, one of their young Christian slaves, and told him to take a bunch of grapes on a platter for the Prophet (ﷺ) to which the bondman obeyed. While in the Prophet's presence, Addas observed his kind demeanor that compelled him to talk to him and instantly professed his faith in Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ).

The Prophet (ﷺ) then returned to Makkah where the Quraysh were as bitterly opposed to him as ever, deriding, annoying and assailing him day after day.

The Ascension

It was during this period that the Prophet (ﷺ) found himself transported at night to the Ka'bah and from there to the place in Jerusalem, where Masjid-ul-Aqsa now stands. Then he was borne to the celestial regions where he witnessed the seven heavens, met the Prophets of yore and saw the remarkable signs of divine majesty about which the Qur'an says:

> **"The eye turned not aside nor yet was overbold, verily he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord."** [Qur'an (53:17-8)]

Occurrence of the event at that time was meant to confer dignity upon the Prophet (ﷺ) ; it signified something like viands of higher regale in order to console and alleviate the feelings of distress caused to him by the persecution of the pagans at Ta'if. After the Ascension incident, the Prophet (ﷺ) told the people about his nocturnal journey, but the Quraysh mocked him and shook their heads stating that it was inconceivable and beyond the bounds of reason.

When Abu Bakr (ﷺ) saw the Quraysh accusing the Prophet (ﷺ) of falsehood he said, "What makes you wonder about it? If he said this, then it must be true. By God, he tells me that the revelation descends upon him

from Heaven in a flash or in an instant during the day or night and I testify for him. This is even more unimaginable and difficult than what seems to astound you." (Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 96, Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 399)

REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ASCENSION

The ascension did not occur in a routine or ordinary run of things only to demonstrate the profound phenomena of the Kingdom of God in the Heavens and the earth to the Prophet (ﷺ) of Islam. More than that, such a prophetic journey of tremendous importance alludes to a number of other significant and complex realities of far-reaching concern to humanity. The two Soorahs of Isra and An-Najm revealed in connection with this heavenly journey indicate that Muhammed was charged with the office of Prophethood for both the Houses of God, those in Jerusalem and Makkah, and was sent as the leader of the east and the west or the entire human race 'til the end of time. As the inheritor of all the Prophets of old, he represented the fulfillment and consummation of mankind's religious development. His nightly journey from Makkah to Jerusalem expresses, in a figurative way, that his personality conformed and alluded to the oneness of Bait-ul-Haram (K'aba at Makkah) and Masjid-ul-Aqsa in Jerusalem. That all the Prophets arrayed themselves behind him in Masjidul-Aqsa shows that the doctrine of Islam, preached by him, was final, universal and all comprehensive--meant for every class and section of human society throughout the ages.

The event is, at the same time, indicative of the comprehensiveness of the Prophet's Prophethood, the place accorded to his followers in the great task of humanity's guidance and the distinctive character of his message.

The ascension of the Prophet (ﷺ) represents a demarcation line between the regional, limited and variable rules of divine guidance entrusted to the Prophets of old and the global, comprehensive and abiding principles of faith conferred to the universal leader of human race. Had the Prophet (ﷺ) been a sectional or regional guide, a national leader, the savior of any particular race or the restorer of the glory of any particular people, there would have been no need to honor him with ascension to the heavens nor would he have been required to perceive the hidden phenomena of the Heavens and the earth. Nor would it have been necessary to create a new link between the celestial and the earthly surface of the Divine Kingdom; in that case the confines of his own land, his surroundings environs and the times would have been sufficient enough and there would have been no need for him to divert his attention to any other land or country. Neither his ascension to the most sublime regions of the Heavens and to the "Lote-Tree of the Farthest Limit" nor even the nocturnal journey to the far away Jerusalem, then in the grip of the powerful Christian Empire of Byzantium, would have been necessary at all.

The ascension of the Prophet (ﷺ) was a divine proclamation that he had nothing to do with the category

of national or political leaders whose endeavours are limited to their own country and nation. For they serve the nations and races to which they belong and are a product of their time, they serve the need of a particular juncture. The Prophet (ﷺ) of Islam, on the contrary, belonged to the luminous line of the Messengers of God who communicate the inspired message of Heaven to the earth. They are links between God and his creatures. Their messages transcend the limitations of time and space, race and color and country or nation, for they are meant for the exaltation of man irrespective of color, race or country.

OBLIGATORY PRAYER

On this occasion, God made fifty prayers a day obligatory for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers. The Prophet (ﷺ) constantly implored God for the reduction of the burden of prayers until the Lord was also pleased to limit these to only five times daily. The Lord was also pleased to declare that whoever properly performs these five times daily prayers would be recompensed for all the fifty daily prayers enjoined earlier. (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab-us-Salat)

TRIBES INVITED TO ISLAM

Thereafter the Prophet (ﷺ) started convening the members of different tribes who came to Makkah for the pilgrimage. He used to explain to them the doctrine of Islam and to solicit support in his mission. He often told the tribesmen. "O ye people, I have been sent to you as the Messenger of God (ﷺ) for asking you to worship Him, to call on you to associate nothing with Him and to renounce everything you have elevated as His co-equal. Believe in God and His Prophet (ﷺ) and protect me until I have explained that which God has sent to me."

Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) counseled any tribe and finished talking to it, Abu Lahab usually stood up to say, "O ye people, this fellow wants you to cast off your obedience to Al-Lat and Al-Uzza and your allies, the Jinn and to exchange your Gods from the wickedness and innovation he has brought. Don't take orders from him nor pay any heed to him. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. pp. 422-23)

Risky Path of Islam

The way leading to Allah and Islam was becoming ever more dangerous. Makkah had become so unsafe and vulnerable for the Muslims that acceptance of Islam meant taking one's life in one's hand.

The story of Abu Dharr Ghifari's conversion to Islam as told by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas shows how perilous it had become even to call upon the Prophet (ﷺ) in those days.

"When Abu Dharr heard of the advent of the Prophet (ﷺ) , he said unto his brother: 'Proceed to that valley and enlighten me about the man who claimeth to be a Prophet (ﷺ) and to receive communication from Heaven. Listen to some of his sayings and then return unto me.' So the brother went forth, reached the Prophet (ﷺ) and heard some of his sayings. Thereafter, he returned to Abu Dharr and said unto him: 'I found that he enjoineth the highest principles of morality and that his speech is not poetry.' - But (Abu Dharr) said: You have not been able to satisfy me.

"Thereupon he took some provisions, together with an old waterskin full of water, and proceeded to Makkah. Then he went to the mosque (K'aba) and began exploring for the Prophet (ﷺ) for he knew him not and was reluctant to ask about him and thus he spent part of the night. Thereupon 'Ali saw him and recognized the same to be a stranger and when Abu Dharr met 'Ali, he went with him (to the latter's house). Until daybreak, neither of the two asked any questions of each other. Then once again he

(Abu Dharr) went with his waterskin and his provisions to the mosque and allowed that day to pass 'til evening without finding the Prophet (ﷺ), although the latter saw him from there. Then he returned to his resting-place. While in there, 'Ali passed by him and said: "Is it not time that a man should know his abode?" And his remarks made him rise and finally brought him to his house, with neither of the two asking any questions of each other, too. And on the third day 'Ali did likewise, and he ('Abu Dharr) stayed with him.

Thereafter 'Ali said: "Will you not tell me what had brought you here?"

Abu Dharr answered: "I will do so only if you promise me that you will guide me right", whereupon 'Ali agreed outright. After that, Abu Dharr told him all.

Then, 'Ali said: "Behold, it is true, and he is indeed an Prophet (ﷺ) of God! Tomorrow morning, you follow me. If indeed I see any danger for you, I will stop as if to pass water; but if I go on, then follow me and enter in whichever place I do." Abu Dharr did so, following 'Ali until he finally found the Prophet's house and entered in it together with him 'Ali. Then he listened to some of the Prophet's sayings and embraced Islam on the spot. Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) said unto him: "Return unto your people and inform them about me and await my bidding."

After which, Abu Dharr said: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, indeed I shall loudly proclaim the truth among them!"

Then he left and went to the mosque and called out at the top of his voice. He proceeded to say: "I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and that Muhammed is His Prophet (ﷺ)." Thereupon, the people of Makkah broke upon him, beat him and then threw him into the ground. At such juncture, Al-'Abbas came, knelt down to see him and said to the people: "Woe unto you, know ye not that he belongeth to the tribe of Ghifar and that your merchants' road to Syria passeth through their country?" Thus, Al-'Abbas rescued him from them.

That incident did not stop Abu Dharr from doing the same thing again, prompting the people (of Makkah) to impose themselves over him anew, whereupon Al-Abbas came once more to his redemption." (Al-Bukhaari, Section: Abu Dharr's conversion to Islam).

Beginning of Islam among the Ansar

The Prophet (ﷺ) met some of the people from the town of Yathrib (Madinah) belonging to the trbe Khazraj at ‘Aqabah when he went to preach Islam to the tribes throughout the tenure of pilgrimage. He told them about Islam and called on them to serve God alone, reciting some Qur’anic verses in the process. As these people lived in Yathrib side by side with the Jews who often told them that a Prophet of God was soon to come, they said to one another: “By God, this is the same thing that the Jews informed us; Lo, nobody should now get ahead of you.” Thereupon they accepted his teachings and embraced Islam. They also said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “When we left our people, conflict and hatred divided them more than any other. Perhaps God will unite them through you. We shall inform them to accept this religion of yours which has been accepted by us, and if God unites them on you, then no man shall be honored more than you.” (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 428-29)

These men returned to their homes after accepting Islam, where they told others about the Prophet (ﷺ) and invited them to accept the new faith. Islam quickly spread in Madinah until there was no home left of the Ansaar ("supporters" as the people if Madinah were to be known) wherein the Prophet (ﷺ) was not mentioned. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 428-29)

FIRST PLEDGE OF ‘AQABAH

At the pilgrimage the next year, twelve men belonging to the Ansaar met the Prophet (ﷺ) at 'Aqabah. They pledged themselves to the Prophet (ﷺ) vowing neither to commit theft nor fornication, nor to kill their children, to obey him in what was right, and to associate nothing with God. When these people left Madinah, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent Mus'ab Ibn 'Umayr (رضي الله عنه) with them to teach the Qur'an to the people there as well as to expound Islam and instruct them about the religion; wherefore 'Umayr came to be called "The reader" in Madina. He lived with As'ad Ibn Zurara and also led prayers. (Ibn Hisham Vol. I, p. 434)

THE REASON FOR ANSAAR'S ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

It was a critical juncture when God afforded the opportunity of helping and defending Islam to the Aus and the Khazraj, the two influential tribes of Yathrib. For there was nothing more precious at the moment than to own and accept Islam, they were really fortunate in getting the most relevant and timely opportunity to take precedence over all other tribes of Hijaz in welcoming and defending the religion of God. They overshadowed their compatriots since all the tribes of Arabia, in general, and the Quraysh, in particular, had proven themselves ungrateful as well as incompetent to take advantage of the greatest favor bestowed upon them.

"And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path"

[Qur'an (2:213)]

Diverse causes and circumstances, proceeding from the will of Almighty God, had opened the door for the acceptance of Islam by the Aus and the Khazraj. These tribes were not of the Makkahn Qurayshites type for unlike them, the Aus and the Khazraj were kind-hearted and sweet-tempered, immune from the Qurayshite traits of immoderation, stubbornness and vanity, and hence they were responsive, open to reason. These were the characteristics inherited from their progenitors, the Yemenites, about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had remarked after meeting one of their deputations: "The people of Yemen have come to you, and they have the tenderest hearts." Both these tribes of Yathrib originally belonged to Yemen for their forefathers had come down from there. Commending the merits of these people, God has said in the Qur'an:

> **"Those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breast no need for that which hath been given them, but prefer the fugitives above themselves though poverty becomes their lot."**
> [Qur'an 59:9]

Another reason was that continuous internecine fighting had already exhausted both tribes. Enervated and distracted by the famous battle of Bu'ath fought a short

time ago (about 615 AD), the said tribes were desirous of peace and harmony and wanted to avoid renewal of warfare. Such was their anxiety for peace that the first Muslims of Madinah had said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "When we left our people, discord and conflict and enmity divided them more than any other. Perhaps God will unite them through you, and if God unites them on you, then no other man will be more than honored as you do."

'Aisha once said that the battle of Bu'ath was really a divine intervention and a blessing in disguise which served as a prelude to the Prophet's migration to Madinah.

Yet another reason was that the Quraysh, like the rest of the Arabian tribes, had for a long time lost touch with Prophethood and the Prophets and had hardly any recollection of their teachings. Deeply immersed in ignorance and idolatry as well as being completely strangers to the arts of reading and writing, they had become overzealous heathens; actually, they had but little contacts even with the Jews and Christians, the followers of the Prophets and their scriptures (although these had since been distorted). This was plain, plum fact to which the Qur'an makes a reference in these words:

"In order that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless"

[Qur'an (36:6)]

But the Aus and the Khazraj were neighbours of Yathrib Jews whom they heard talking about the Prophets and

reciting their scriptures. The Jews often thereatened them that a Prophet (ﷺ) was to come in the later times with whom they would ally themselves and kill the heathens just as the people of 'Ad and Iram were massacred. (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. I, p. 217)

> **"And when there cometh unto them a Scripture from Allah, confirming that in their possession - though before disbelieved - and when there cometh unto them that which they know (to be the Truth) they disbelieve therein. The curse of Allah is on disbelievers."** [Qur'an (2:89)]

Aus and Khazraj as well as other Arab tribes settled in Madinah were heathens like the idolatrous Quraysh and the rest of the Arabs. But unlike them, they had become accustomed to the idea of revelation in the form of a scripture of supernatural origin, prophecy, Prophetship, inspiration, requital and the hereafter. This was courtesy of their uninterrupted association with the Jews of the city from whom they had business transactions, made war and peace and lived side by side. They had, thus, come to know the teachings of the Prophets of old and the reason why God sends them from time to time. This was of great advantage to these people, for, when they learned about the Prophet (ﷺ) on the occasion of Hajj at Makkah, they at once grabbed the opportunity as if they were already prepared for it.

Importance of Madinah

Apart from the great honor to be bestowed upon the people of Madinah and such other reasons accessible only to the All-knowing God, one of the considerations in the selection of the town as the future center of Islam was that it was, from a strategic point of view brought about by its geography and defense, impregnable like a fortified city. No other town of the Arabian Peninsula enjoyed the same advantage. Lying in a lava plain, surrounded on all sides by chains of high mountains, the Western side of the city is protected by the lava and extremely uneven hilly terrain known as Harratal-al-Wabra while Harra-al-Waqim surrounds it on the eastern side. Madinahh lies unprotected and open to military advance only in the north (where, in 5 A.H., the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered to dig trenches on the occasion of the battle of clans). Thickly clustered plantations of date-palm groves encompassed the town on the remaining sides. An army taking this route would have had to maintain communications through deep valleys and ravines. Thus, it would have been difficult to attack Madinah in full force from these sides while the defenders could have easily conquered the invaders through small outlying pickets.

Ibn Is'haq writes: "Only one side of Madinah was exposed, and the rest of the sides were strongly protected by buildings and date-palm groves through which an enemy could not get access."

The Prophet (ﷺ) had perhaps covertly referred to this very aspect of Madinah when he said before his migration: **"I have been shown the goal of your migration - a land of palm-trees lying between two tracts strewn with black, rugged stones."** All those who resolved upon migration proceeded thereupon to Madinah. (Al-Bukhari).

The two Arab tribes of Madinah, the Aus and the Khazraj, were well known for their passionate, chauvinistic spirit of the clan; self-respect, boldness and valor while riding horses was one of the manly skills in which they excelled. Freedom of the desert was in their blood: neither had they ever submitted to any authority nor paid impost to a sovereign. The heroic character of these tribes was plainly set forth when the chief of Aus, S'ad Ibn Mu'adh had said to the Prophet (ﷺ) during the battle of Trenches: "When we and these people were polytheist and idolaters, not serving God nor knowing Him, they never hoped to eat a single date except as guests or by a purchase." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 289)

"The two clans of Yathrib..." writes Ibn Khaldun, "...dominated over the Jews and were distinguished because of their prestige and eminence. The tribe of Mudar, which was just around the vicinity, was cognate with them." (Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. II, p. 289)

Ibn 'Abd-I-Rabbehi, another Arab historian, writes in the Al-'Iqd al-Farid; "The Ansaar descended from the tribe of Azd. Known as Aus and Khazraj, they were lineal descendants of the two sons of Haritha Ibn 'Amr Ibn

Amir. Being more proud and dignified than others, they had never paid tribute to any regime or supremacy."
(Al-'Iqd ul-Farid, Vol. III, p. 334)

They were related, on the material side, to the Banu 'Adiy Ibn al-Najjar who had given one of their daughters, Salma bint 'Amr, to Hashim in marriage. To Hashim she bore 'Abdul Muttalib, but Hashim, however, left the boy with his mother in Yathrib where he was brought up and was taken to Makkah by his uncle after he had grown up into a youth. These blood relationships, which were the adhesive elements in tribal organization, cannot be ignored since kinship played an important role in the social life of the Arabs. On reaching Madinahh, the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed with Abu Ayyub Ansari who belonged to Banu 'Adiy Ibn al-Najjar.

Aus and Khazraj traced back their roots from Qahtan while the Muslims hailing from Makkah or other places close to it claimed their descent from 'Adnan. Thus, after the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah and the Ansaar pledged their support to him, both the 'Adnan and Qahtan had been at odds with one another during the pre-Islamic times but they were banded together in Madinah and thus the pagan passions of blood and clan, of vanity and pride and of contemptuous self-conceit were abolished by the wholesome influence of Islam.

For all these causes and considerations as well as for its strategic location, Madinah was the fittest place to be selected for the emigration of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions as it was eminently suited to be made the

radiating center of Islam until it gained enough strength to prevail over the Peninsula and charged the whole country with a new spirit of virtue and godliness.

EXPANSION OF ISLAM IN MADINAH

The teachings of Islam were so appealing that the people of the Aus and the Khazraj, awakened to interest, quickly attested their faith in it. S'ad Ibn Mu'adh was the first to embrace, then Usayd Ibn Hudayr, the leader of Bani 'Abdul Ash'hal, a clan of Aus followed suit. The wise and courteous stance of Mus'ab Ibn Umary, together with the proper manner in which he presented Islam to them, convinced these people of the truth that is Islam. Then the remaining clansmen of Bani 'Abdul Ash'al were led to accept the faith such that shortly thereafter, there was not a house of the Ansaar in which a man or a woman had not given his or her faith to Islam. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 436-38)

THE SECOND PLEDGE OF 'AQABA

In the next year, during Hajj, Mus'ab Ibn Umayr (ﷺ) went back to Makkah with a number of Ansaar Muslims and other polytheists of Madinah. After the Ansaar had performed their pilgrimage, the Prophet (ﷺ) met them at the previous year's meeting place late in the middle of the night. At this time, there were seventy-three of them, including two women. The Prophet of God (ﷺ) came

accompanied by his Uncle, 'Abbas Ibn 'Abdul Muttalib, who had still not embraced Islam.

The Prophet (ﷺ) talked to them, read some of the Qur'an and invited them to accept Islam. Then he said, "I invite your allegiance on a condition that you would protect me in the same way as you would your women and children." They gave allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) but demanded that he would not leave them nor return to his own people. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said in reply, "I am of you and you are of me. I will fight against them that make war upon you and have peace with those that keep peace with you."

Thereafter the Prophet (ﷺ) selected twelve of them, nine from the Khazraj and three from the Aus, as their leaders. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 436-38)

Rejection of Islam

Any new movement or cause that emerges for the first time in a society will be considered strange and unfamiliar and will be met with skepticism, apprehensiveness, and doubt and - in most cases - opposition, rejection and disapproval. The wider the gap between the society in its beliefs, customs and laws and the ideals of the new movement, the greater the conflict between the two.

The pre-Islamic Arabs were a people beset by corruption, deviant beliefs, foolish customs, and engrossed in idolatry. It was in stark contrast to the message that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) brought; a message that called on the people to reject all of their false deities - their rocks and trees and idols - and to purify all of their worship for Allah alone; The enormous difference between pre-Islamic society and Islam was enough as a cause for the difficulties that Islam and the early Muslims faced. However, there were some other distinct and specific causes that deserve mentioning because of their importance in explaining the hardships early Muslims had to endure.

First: The Weak Influence of the Prophetic Legacy in the Arabian Peninsula

The influence of Prophethood and divine guidance was negligible in the Arabian Peninsula due to the fact that no Prophet was ever sent to the Arabian Peninsula before the

coming of Muhammed (ﷺ), who was the last and final Prophet sent to all of mankind.

Allah, the Most High, informs us that the Arabs were never sent a Prophet in His statement: **Or say they: "He (Muhammed) has fabricated it?" Nay, it is the truth from your Lord, so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you [O Muhammed] in order that they may be guided.** [Soorah As-Sajdah, Verse 3]

Allah also says: **"In order that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless."** [Soorah Yasin, Verse 7]

And Allah explains that no book was revealed to them nor was there any messenger sent to them in his statement:

"And We had not given them scriptures which they could study, nor sent to them before you [O Muhammed] any warner" (Messenger)."

Then Allah removed any excuse that the Arabs might have had for not following divine guidance by sending the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) right into their midst. Allah the Most High says in His book:

"And this is a blessed Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allah (i.e. do not disobey His Orders), that you may receive mercy (i.e. be saved from the torment of Hell). Lest you (pagan Arabs) should say: "The Book was sent down only to two sects before us (the Jews and the Christians), and for our part,

we were in fact unaware of what they studied." Or lest you should say: "If only the book had been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than they." So now has come unto you a clear proof (the Qur'an) from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy…" [Soorah Al-An'am, verses 155-157]

As for the vestiges of the religion of Ibraheem that they inherited from their forefathers as well as the traces left by those Prophets and Messengers who came after him, all of that had become no more than ancient ceremonies practiced out of a desire to claim that they posessed some heritage from their forefather Ibraheem and the Prophets who came after him (ﷺ). However, the pre-Islamic Arabs strayed so far from the original forms of these religions that they even fashioned pictures of Ibraheem and Ismaeel to conform with the prevailing idolatry of the times.

In an authentic hadith narrated upon the authority of Ibn Abbas who said:

"When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to Makkah, he refused to enter the Ka'bah while there were idols in it. He ordered the idols to be taken out, so they were taken out. When they removed pictures of Ibraheem and Ismaeel holding Azlams in their hands, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: **'May Allah curse these people. By Allah, Ibraheem and Ismaeel never played the game of chance with Azlams.' Then he entered the Ka'bah and said Takbeer in the corners of the Ka'bah but he did not pray while inside."**

Even more lamentable was the fact that the Ka'bah, which is the very symbol of monotheism, was turned into a house of idols and eventually housed 360 idols in and around it! In an authentic hadith narrated upon the authority of Abd-Allah ibn Masud who said:

"When the Prophet (ﷺ) entered Makkah on the Day of the Conquest, there were three hundred and sixty idols around the Ka'bah. The Prophet started striking the idols with a stick he had in his hand, saying: **'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished, the Truth has come and falsehood can neither create from the beginning nor can it restore life.'**

The feeling that the pre-Islamic nation of Arabs had that they were the inheritors of the religion of Ibraheem and preservers of the religious rites that he came with and that they were the caretakers of the Ka'bah made it even more difficult for them to accept the message that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent with by his Lord.

> **When he called them to make all of their worship for Allah, Who is alone without partner and Who alone deserves to be worshipped, they said: "Has he made the gods all into One God (Allah). Verily this is a strange thing!"** [Soorah Saad: Verse 5]

While at the same time they would acknowledge that which was in conformity with the message of monotheism in times of distress as is evident in Allah's statement:

"And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only: but when He

brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others." [Soorah Ankabauut: Verse 65]

And whenever the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) would warn them about the Day of Judgment they would deny all of the signs, proofs and evidences that the Day is in fact coming and they would say:

> **"When we are dead and have become dust (shall we be resurrected?) That is a far return."** [Soorah Qaf: Verse 3]

Second: The Fanatical Adherence of the Pagan Arabs to the Cultural Heritage of their Ancestors

It was the practice of these idolaters to revere the customs of their forefathers doing. In fact it was the most important rule of their society and whoever hesitated about or rejected part of their culture was considered to have dishonored the ancestors As a result the biggest obstacle to the message of monotheism was ancestor worship in the form of blindly and unquestioningly following the customs and practices.

The pre-Islamic Arabs, when they were called to the Book that Allah had revealed and to the truth that the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) came with, they were stubborn and obstinate in their refusal and said: **"Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following"!** [Qur'an: Al-Ma'idah: Aayah 104]

They also said: **"Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following."** [Qur'an Al-Baqarah: Aayah 170]

They only resorted to this argument because they had no other excuse. Their argument was not credible nor was it based upon sound reasoning nor did they have proof from any book and it is for this reason that Allah said about them:

"Yet of mankind is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge or guidance or a book giving light! And when it is said to them: "Follow that which Allah sent down", they say: "Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers following." [Qur'an: Luqman, Aayah 20-21]

And in general this was how every nation of people rejected the Prophets and Messengers sent to them by Allah even though the message they were sent with was full of light and guidance. Allah documented in His Book what the unbelieving Arabs said as well as what all unbelievers say:

"Or have we given them any Book before this (the Qur'an) to which they are holding fast? Nay! They say: "We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we guide ourselves by their footsteps." And similarly, We sent not a warner before you (O Muhammed) to any town (people) but the luxurious ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footsteps." (The warner) said: "Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?" They said: "Verily, we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent." [Qur'an: Az-Zukhruf: Aayah 21-24]

Third: Jewish and the Christian Solidarity with the Pagan Arabs Against Islam

The Jews and Christians in Arabia were jealous because the newly revealed divine guidance was not revealed directly to them, so they were openly hostile to the message of Muhammed (ﷺ). The pagan Arabs respected and admired the Jews and the Christians because of the books and knowledge that they possessed. Since the Arab's idolatry was fundamentally opposed to the message of monotheism, they took the attitude of the People of the Book as a legitimation for their resistance to the message of Muhammed (ﷺ). Since the Jews and the Christians, who were the inheritors of books that had been previously revealed and more knowledgeable than them in matters of religion, denied the message of Muhammed (ﷺ) that they too should deny it as well! This argument turned out to be one of the strongest arguments that the pagan Arabs used to encourage each other to reject Islam. Allah says:

"And the leaders among them went about (saying): "Go on, and remain constant to your gods! Verily, this is a thing designed (against you)! We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days (i.e. Christianity). This is nothing but an invention!" [Qur'an : Sad : Verse 6-7]

This argument was apparently (and Allah knows best) based upon statements that the People of the Book made to the pagan Arabs in opposition to the Messenger

Muhammed (ﷺ) since the Arabs did not have much knowledge about what was contained in the previously revealed books. Allah says in another place in the Qur'an, referring to statements that the Jews made to the pagan Arabs against those who believed in Allah's oneness:

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Scripture? They believe in Jibt and Taghut and say to the disbelievers that they are better guided as regards the way than the believers (Muslims). They are those whom Allah has cursed, and he whom Allah curses, you will not find for him any helper." [Qur'an 4:51-52]

This was because the Jews allied themselves with the pagan Arabs in the fight against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and gave credibility to their religion of idolatry, and because they preferred the pagan Arabs to the believers.

In a hadith narrated upon the authority of Ibn Abbas who said: "When K'ab ibn Al-Ashraf (a Jew) arrived in Makkah the Quraysh said to him: 'Are you the best of the people of Medinah and their chief?' He said: 'yes.' They said (asking about the Prophet (ﷺ)): 'Have you not seen that man who has no sons who claims that he is better than we are? We are the people of Makkah who host the pilgrims and supply them with water and we are the caretakers of the Ka'bah.' He (K'ab ibn Al-Ashraf) said: 'You are better than him.'

(Then Allah) revealed the verse: "For he who hates you (O Muhammed), he will be cut off (from posterity and

every good thing in this world and in the Hereafter)" [Soorah Al-Kauthar:Verse 3]

And Allah also revealed: **"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They believe in Jibt and Taghut}…until the statement of Allah {and he whom Allah curses, you will not find for him (any) helper."** [Soorah An-Nisa:Verses 51-52]

These characteristics accurately portray Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf (a Jew) who went to the pagan Arabs of the tribe of Quraysh hoping to mobilize an army to fight against the Prophet (ﷺ) saying to them: 'Verily we will fight along with you against him…'

So those who were corrupt amongst the followers of the previously revealed religions who joined the ranks of the idolaters out of envy from their own selves, even after the truth that Muhammed is Allah's Messenger became manifest unto them. They joined the ranks of the idolaters even though they were the first people who should have believed in the Qur'an and helped the Messenger and disbelieved in the idolatry of the pagan Arabs.

It is now possible for us to imagine some of the hardships that the Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) had to endure along with those few believers who were with him. It was as if the whole world was against them and all of the different groups had unified in opposition to the believers. This was their condition from the very beginning of this

new message until Allah caused Islam to take firm root in the hearts of the Ansaar in the city of Medinah and the first Islamic state was established.

Fourth: Authority Held By Tribal Chieftains

The Arabs were a tribal people with deep-rooted practices that governed most aspects of their lives. These included their notions of nobility, rulership, and political power and led to tribal conflicts and struggles for dominance.

When Allah chose Muhammed (ﷺ) to be a Prophet and Messenger, he was from amongst the elite of his people since he had the blood of two noble families. The family of Abdu-Manaf on his father's side and Zuhra on his mother's. He was from amongst the nobles of the tribe of Quraysh and from the clan of Bani Hashim, which was the noblest bloodline of the Arabs. Muhammed was also known to be very well mannered, generous and kind natured. Far from having any of the defects in his character that the people commonly boasted about in their ignorance and untouched by any blemishes on his reputation because Allah the Most High was always protecting him and guarding him from every suspicion or short coming.

However in spite of all that, he did not become leader of his tribe for many reasons related to age and other circumstances on the one hand, and on the other because of Allah's divine wisdom and secret protection of the

message of Islam from being mixed up with worldly ambitions that insincere people are drawn to.

As a result, one of the reasons the pagan Arabs rejected Islam was because they wondered amongst themselves why Muhammed was chosen for this mission.

That was because they did not fully realize the virtue of his moral excellence and the special quality of his personality. Therefore they were not of the opinion that he was better than them or their equal rather they thought that such and such person from the great, important men of distinction from one of the tribes should have been chosen to bring the message. Allah the Most High says:

And they say: **"Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man of the two towns (Makkah and Ta'if)?"**
[Soorah Az-Zukhruf, Verse 31]

Obviously the pagan Arabs had no business trying to involve themselves in the matter of Allah's divine choosing of whomever He wills as a Prophet. Especially since they, with their corrupt souls and confused intellect and bad natures, refused to even follow the chosen Prophet of Allah (ﷺ)!

They even went to the extreme of requesting from Allah that every single one of them be raised to the position of a Prophet and Messenger and that angels come to them and that they be given revelation! As if each one of them could never follow anyone else! Allah the Most High says:

"And when there comes to them a sign (from Allah) they say: "We shall not believe until we receive the like of that which the Messengers of Allah had received." Allah knows best with whom to place Message. Humiliation and disgrace from Allah and a severe torment will overtake the criminals (polytheists, sinners) for that which they used to plot." [Soorah Al-An'aam, Verse 124]

They attached great importance to themselves and haughtily refused to follow another human being even if he was a Prophet (ﷺ) who received revelation from the heavens. They proclaimed: **"If you were to obey another human being like yourselves, then verily you indeed would be losers."** [Soorah Al-Mu'minun, Verse 34]

As a result of the importance of adhering to tribal customs regarding leadership, the people who were from the same clan as the Messenger Muhammed (ﷺ) refused to follow him, arguing that he was not a chieftain of their clan nor was he one who held a leadership position amongst them. Meanwhile those who were from a different clan refused in order to protect the status of their clan's. Those who were from a different tribe altogether rejected the message of Islam hoping to protect the status of their tribe by not following someone from a different tribe!

Once Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan and Al-Akhnas ibn Shareeq listened to the Qur'an night after night. One

morning Al-Akhnas ibn Shareeq went to Abu Jahl and asked: 'O Abu Al-Hakam what do you think about that which you have heard from Muhammed?' He replied: 'What have I heard? He disputes with us and the honorable tribe of Abdu Manaf: they provided food and we have provided food, they have carried a burden and we have carried a burden, they gave and we gave until we became firmly united as if we had already mounted our fastest horses. They said: 'Is there a Prophet (ﷺ) from amongst us who receives revelation from the sky! When will we ever be able to say this? By Allah we will never listen to him and we will never believe in him.' Then Al-Akhnas ibn Shareeq arose and departed from Abu Jahl.

The opposition of the tribe of Quraysh heavily influenced the rest of the Arabs to oppose Islam. The influence of the Quraysh was so great that even if they had not exerted themselves in their resistance to Islam and in the defamation of the Prophet (ﷺ), they still would have swayed the people. That was because all of the Arabs looked to the Quraysh and waited for their approval. The tribe of Quraysh enjoyed a high status among the Arabs. The Arabs revered the Quraysh for many reasons, especially because they were the people who lived close to the Ka'bah and were the caretakers of Allah's house.

Emigration to Madinah

THE EMIGRATION

Thanks to the allegiance and support offered by the Ansaar, the Muslims found a new rock of refuge. The Prophet (ﷺ) commanded the Muslims in Makkah to emigrate from Makkah and join their brothers-in-faith, the Ansaar, in Madinah. He told his companions, "God has provided to you some brethren and homes where you will live in safety." So the Muslims departed, one small group after another, from Makkah to Yathrib, leaving the Prophet (ﷺ) behind in Makkah in anticipation of the command of Allah as to when he should leave the city.

But it was not easy to emigrate as the Quraysh decided at once to take stringent measures against them. The pagan Quraysh did everything they could to stop the exodus such as creating obstacles along the way of the emigrants to prevent their departure. The Muslims, though, were equally determined to leave at all costs. Some, like Abu Salama, had departed alone, leaving their wives and children, while others, like Suhayb, had to give up their life-long earnings before leaving Makkah. Umm Salama relates the following about her and her husband's departure:

"When Abu Salama had made up his mind to set out for Madinah, he saddled his camel and mounted me on it with my son Salama. Then, taking hold of the camel's

halter, he went ahead. When some of the men belonging to Bani al-Mughari saw him, they came near us saying, "It is alright so far as you are concerned, but how can we allow your wife to go with you?" They snatched the camel's headstall from his hand and took me with them. At this crucial point, Banu 'Abdul Asad, the clansmen of Abu Salama, got angry. They said: 'By God, you have torn her from our brother, but we will not allow our son to go with her." A scuffle started between them for the child Salama, until his arm was dislocated, and Bani Asad took him away leaving me with Bani al-Mughira while my husband went away to Madinah. Thus, all the three of us -- my self, my husband and my son were separated. I used to go out every morning to Abtah weeping till nightfall. A whole year passed in this manner when one of my cousins from Al-Mughira took pity on me and said to Bani al-Mughira: "Why don't you let this poor woman go? You have separated her from her husband and son." So they said to me: "You can go to your husband if you like." Then Banu Asad reunited me with my son. I saddled my camel and taking the child with me, set out for Madinah in search of my husband accompanied by not a blessed soul with me. When I arrived at Tan'im I happened to meet 'Uthman Ibn Talha of Bani 'Abdul-Dar who asked me where I intended to go. I replied that I was going to my husband in Medinah. He asked if I had anybody with me to which I said in reply, 'None save this child and God.' He said, 'By God, it is not easy for you to reach your destination'. He took hold of the camel's rope and went

ahead leading it. I swear, I have never met a man nobler than he. Whenever we had to stop, he used to kneel the camel and withdraw; after I had got down, he used to unload the camel, tie it to a tree and go away to take rest under a tree. In the evening, he used to saddle the camel and load it, and then withdrew asking me to ride; he came back after I had mounted and taking the halter in his hand, he went ahead to the next destination…thus he escorted me until I reached Madinah. When he saw Quba, the habitation of Bani 'Amr Ibn 'Auf, he said, 'Your husband is in this village. Now go to him with the blessing of God." Thus he bade me farewell and went off on his way back to Makkah."

She also used to say that no family in Islam suffered the hardships the way that the family of Abu Salama did. (Ibn Kathir, Vol.2, PP.215-17)

When Suhayb tried to leave for Madinah, the disbelieving Quraysh said to him, "You came to us as a destitute beggar and have grown rich among us, and now you want to go away safely with your life and wealth. By God, it shall never be so!" Suhayb asked, "Would you allow me to go if I give my property to you?" When they replied in the affirmative, Suhayb said, "I will give you the whole of it."

When the Prophet (ﷺ) was told about the incident, he exclaimed, "Suhayb has made a profit! Suhayb has made a profit!" (Ibn Kathir, Vol.2, P.233)

The emigrants to Medinah during this period were 'Umar, Talha, Hamza, Zayd Ibn Haritha,' Abdur Rahman Ibn Auf, Zubayr Ibn al-Awwam, Abu Hudhayafa, 'Uthman Ibn' Affan and several other companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them all). Thereafter, the emigrants trickled away one by one. The only ones left in Makkah, besides the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) were either those who are detained because of some restraints or those who had fallen victims of their own shortcomings. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 470-79)

AN UNSUCCESSFUL CONSPIRACY

The emigration of Muslims to Madinah frightened the Makkahns. For they fully understood that the Prophet (ﷺ) had already established a base with a large number of adherents in a foreign territory beyond their reach, and if he were also to join them there, then they would be rendered helpless, deprived of all authority over him. They held a council in Dar al-Nadwa where all the chiefs of the Quraysh had assembled to deliberate on the possible solutions to the problem.

They debated and scrutinized the various suggestions and finally decided unanimously that each clan should provide a young, courageous and blue-blooded warrior so that all of them would fall upon Muhammed to jointly kill him. Thus, the responsibility of shedding his blood would lie equally on all the clans, and no single clan whatsoever would then be held responsible for it and 'Abdu Munaf

for sure, would not dare take up a hatchet against all the people. Determined to slay the Prophet (ﷺ), the pagans dispersed to execute their treacherous scheme.

But the Prophet (ﷺ) was warned of their wicked plan by the All-Knowing God and thus, had asked ‘Ali instead to lie on his bed and wrap himself in his mantle, assuring him that no harm would come to him.

The shrewd and determined gang stood outside the Prophet’s house with scimitars, prepared to attack the Prophet (ﷺ) as he emerged. When Muhammed (ﷺ) came out, he threw a handful of dust. God instantly obscured their eyesight and the Prophet (ﷺ) went through their ranks, sprinkling the dust over their heads and reciting the Soorah Ya Sin:

"And we have set a bar before them and a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not." [Qur'an 36:9]

He passed right through them but nobody was able to see him. Then, there came a man who asked them, “What are you waiting for?” When they replied that they were waiting for Muhammed, he said, “May God confound you! He has already gone away.” They peeped through the chink of the door and saw ‘Ali sleeping on the bed wrapped in the Prophet’s mantle. They had mistaken him for the Prophet (ﷺ) and decided to wait till morning when ‘Ali got up from the bed. All of them were abashed by the incident. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. Pp. 480-83)

A STRANGE INCONSISTENCY

The unbelieving Quraysh of Makkah were bitterly set against the Prophet (ﷺ). Yet they were absolutely convinced of his truthfulness and trustworthiness, nobility and magnanimity. If anybody in Makkah apprehended loss or misappropriation of his property, he usually deposited it with the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) had thus a number of things committed to his care. He, therefore, charged ‘Ali to return these to their owners before leaving Makkah. Of a fact, such strange behavior from Quraysh and such noble behavior from the Prophet at such a critical moment is a testimony to the nobility of the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as to the callousness of Quraysh.

“We know well how their talk grieveth thee, though in truth they deny not thee (Muhammed) but evil-doers flout the revelations of Allah.” [Qur'an 6:33]

The fact that the polytheists trusted Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) with their possessions, even though they were fighting against him and insisting upon his death, is an evidence that the enemies of the mission, deep in their hearts, believed in the righteousness, honesty, and nobility of the reformer. They believed that he was better off than them in his behavior and that his heart was purer than theirs. But the insensitivity or indifference of their hearts, their stubbornness, and their resolute grip towards their errant customs and beliefs, aptly known as resistance to change,

lured them to fight against him, harm him and finally conspire to kill him.

Prophet's Emigration

The Prophet (ﷺ) came to Abu Bakr and told him that God had given him permission to emigrate from Makkah. Abu Bakr exclaimed, "Together, O Prophet (ﷺ) of God?"; for he was anxious to keep him company." Then Abu Bakr presented two camels he had been keeping for the purpose. 'Abdullah Ibn Urayqit was hired by Abu Bakr to act as a guide.

The emigration of the Prophet (ﷺ) illustrates how everything howsoever coveted by one, can be sacrificed for the sake of one's faith or ideals. Worldly estate and effects or any other thing that a man is disposed to value can never take the place of his faith nor can the faith be bartered away for the entire world. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but suffers the loss of his soul.

Makkah was the birthplace of the Prophet (ﷺ). As the homeland of the Prophet (ﷺ) of God and his companions, it was very dear to them. It also had the house of God, loved and adored by them like the light of one's eye. But nothing stood in the way of their bidding farewell to their hearts and homes, families and kinsmen. This was due to the fact that the pagans of Makkah would not allow them the freedom of conscience and liberty to practice their faith.

The Prophet (ﷺ) loved Makkah but he valued his faith more. One was a natural feeling of affection and the other an insatiable thirst of soul. We find the two tenderest

feelings of human nature articulately expressed by the Prophet (ﷺ) while leaving Makkah.

"No city is sweeter to me than you, are and how ardently I love you. Had my people not exiled me, I would never have lived anywhere else." (Tirmidhi, Chap. Fadl Makkah)

The Prophet (ﷺ) had, in truth, to leave his homeland to fulfill his Lord's command.
"O my bondmen who believe! Lo! My earth is spacious. Therefore serve Me only." [Qur'an 29:56]

TOWARDS THE CAVE OF "MT. THAWR

The Prophet (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr stealthily proceeded to the cave of Mt. Thawr. Abu Bakr instructed his son 'Abdullah to find out the hostile plans and conversations of the Makkans concerning them and then relay these to him. Furthermore, he asked Amir Ibn Fuhayrah, his slave, to feed his flocks of milch ewe by the day and bring food for them in the evening. Asma, his daughter, used to bring food for them at night.

Abu Bakr exhibited great concern for the Prophet of God (ﷺ) during this journey. It is related that when the Prophet (ﷺ) set out for the cave on Mt. Thawr, Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) sometimes went ahead of the Prophet (ﷺ) and then behind him, until the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed his restlessness and asked, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), what's the matter? Often you come behind me and sometimes you go ahead!" Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) replied, "O Prophet (ﷺ) of

God, when I think of those pursuing you, I come behind you but then I apprehend an ambuscade so that I go in front of you."

When they arrived at the cave in Mt. Thawr, Abu Bakr requested the Prophet (ﷺ) to wait until he had searched and cleaned up the cave. So, he went in, explored it and came out after cleaning up. Then he remembered that he had not properly searched one hole. He again asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to wait a bit so he can check it for the second time around. Only then did he allow the Prophet (ﷺ) to enter the cave after he had fully convinced himself that it did not harbor wild or dangerous beasts.

A MOST CRITICAL MOMENT OF HUMAN HISTORY

The most critical moment of the world's history, when the fate of mankind hanged by a thread, drew near as the Qurayshite horsemen on the look out for the two fugitives galloping over the desert and came to the cave where the two had secluded themselves. The world was as if at a standstill, holding its breath in suspense: The pursuers, who stood debating among themselves at the mouth of the cave, resolved that nobody could be inside it.

One may think it is fantastic or miraculous but it was how God helped His Prophet (ﷺ).

> **"Then Allah caused His peace of reassurance to descend upon him and supported him with hosts ye cannot see."** [Qur'an 9:40]

Peering, Abu Bakr looked over his head. He saw the blood-thirsty warriors of the Quraysh standing at the mouth of the cave. Then he said to his companion with a trembling heart, "O Prophet of God, they will see us if anybody steps forward."

"What misgivings have you," replied the Prophet (ﷺ), "about the two with whom the third is Allah?" It was as if to remind that at this event, the revelation came down from God:

> **"When they two were in the cave, when he said to his comrade: Grieve not, Lo! Allah is with us."** [Qur'an 9:40]

SURAQA FOLLOWS THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

The Quraysh offered a reward of one hundred camels to anyone who brought back the Prophet (ﷺ), dead or alive. The Prophet (ﷺ) spent three nights in the cave and then guided by 'Amir Ibn Fuhayrah went along the road by the sea-coast. Suraqa Ibn Malik Ibn Ju'shum heard of the price set by the Quraysh on the head of the Prophet (ﷺ) and hurried after him. The reward of hundred camels was too tempting for him that he got up on his mare and went after the fugitives tracking their footsteps. He let his mare run swiftly until he nearly over-took the fugitives. But, lo, his mare stumbled abruptly, and hitherto, he was thrown

off. He rose up, composed himself, and remounted the mare, and let her go ahead. Once more, the mare stumbled and he was again thrown off, but nevertheless continued the chase until he could see the three men going ahead. Suddenly, his mare stumbled for the third time, its fore-legs sinking up to the knees on the ground, and he was thrown off once again. He also saw dust rising from the ground like a sandstorm.

Suraqa was now convinced that the Prophet (ﷺ) was protected against him and he would not in any case triumph over the latter. He called out saying that he was Suraqa Ibn Ju'shum and that he would not inflict any harm to them. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered Abu Bakr to ask him what he wants from them. Suraqa replied, "Write for me a warrant of security." Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered 'Amir Ibn Fuhayrah to write the warrant which he wrote on a piece of tanned leather or bone. Suraqa preserved the document as a memento of sorts. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 489-90; Al-Bukhaari, Chap. Hijratun Nabi)

The Prophet of God (ﷺ) had been driven out of his homeland and the enemy pursuing him was after his blood, but his mind's eye was envisioning the day when his followers would be ascendant upon the realms of the Caesars and Chosroes. In those adverse circumstances, in the darkest hour of his life, he made a prediction of the bright times ahead. To Suraqa he said, "Suraqa, how will you feel when you will put on Chosroes' bracelets?"

God has indeed promised succor, victory and prosperity to His Prophet (ﷺ) and the triumphant ascendancy of His Religion of Truth.

"He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, however much the disbelievers may be averse." [Qur'an 9:33]

Those who cannot see beyond the material agency of causes and effects would shrug their shoulders at this prediction: the Quraysh discarded the forebodings of the Prophet (ﷺ) as incredulous and inconceivable, but the foreseeing Prophet (ﷺ) was peeping into the future:

"Lo! Allah faileth not to keep the tryst." [Qur'an 13:31]

And the events took shape exactly in the same way as the Prophet (ﷺ) had foretold to Suraqa. When Persia was conquered and the tiara, robe and the bracelets of Chosroes were brought to 'Umar, he sent for Suraqa and asked him to put on the royal dress. (Al-Isti'ab, Vol. II, p. 597)

Suraqa took the warrant of security for he was by then convinced of the victory of the Prophet (ﷺ). He offered some provisions and utensils, but the Prophet (ﷺ) accepted nothing from him. He simply said to Suraqa, "Keep our whereabouts secret."

THE BLESSED GUEST

Abu Bakr and the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by the tent of Umm M'abad, a woman of Khuza'a, who had a milk ewe but its udder had dried up owing to drought. God's Messenger wiped its udder with his hand and mentioning the name of God the most High. He prayed that Umm M'abad might have a blessing in her ewe. It then gave a flow of milk. He first gave Umm M'abad and others a drink until all of them were fully satisfied, then he drank knowing everyone was through. He milked it the second time around and when the vessel was full, left it with her. When Abu M'abad came back and his wife told him about the prodigious happening and the angelic stranger, he replied, "By God, he appears to be the same man of the Quraysh whom they are prowling after."

They continued their journey with the guide until they reached Quba in the vicinity of Madinah. This was on Monday, the 12th day of Rabi ul-Awwal. (24th September, 622 A.D.) A new era was indeed commencing, because it was from the start of this year that the Islamic calendar of Hijrah took its humble beginnings!

The People of Madinah

Yathrib had been chosen by Allah to shelter the Messenger of God (ﷺ) after his emigration and to bring forth not only the first Islamic Society but also to serve as a focal point for the universal call of Islam. The great honor accorded to the city makes it necessary to know its distinctive features, its unique physical, social and cultural conditions, like those of the Arab tribes living there and their interactions with one another, the economic and political manipulations of the Jews and their fighting spirit as well as the way of life sustained by its fertile land. Various religions, cultures and communities flourished in the city in stark contrast to Makkah, which was dominated by one faith and one cultural pattern. The details given here, albeit briefly, depict the state of affairs in Madinah when the Prophet (ﷺ) made his debut in that city.

THE JEWISH PRESENCE

The view preferred by historians about Jewish settlements in Arabia, at large and those in Madinah, in particular, is that they date from the first century A.D. Dr. Israel Welphenson writes that:

"After Palestine and Jerusalem were laid waste in 70 A.D. and the Jews dispersed to different parts of the world, a number of them made their way to Arabia. This is in accordance with the Jewish historian Josephus, who was himself present at the siege of Jerusalem and had led the Jewish units on several occasions. Arab sources also corroborate his statement."

Three Jewish tribes, Qaynuqaa', an-Nadhir and Quraydha, were settled in Madinah. The number of adults belonging to these tribes was over two thousand where Qaynuqaa' was estimated to have seven hundred combatants, with an-Nadir having almost the same number too, while the adult men of Quraydha were reported to be between seven and nine hundred.
These tribes were not on good terms and very often they are caught in confrontations with one another. Dr. Israel Welphenson says:

"Bani Qaynuqaa' were set against the rest of the Jews because they had sided with Bani Khazraj in the battle of Bu'ath in which Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraydha had inflicted a crushing defeat and massacred Bani Qaynuqaa' even though the latter had paid bloodwit for the prisoners of war. The bitterness among the Jewish tribes continued to persist after the battle of Bu'ath. When Bani Qaynuqaa' subsequently fell out with the Ansaar, no other Jewish tribe came to their aid against them (Ansaar)." (Al-Yahud fi Balad il'Arab, p. 129)

The Qur'an also makes a reference to the mutual discord between the Jews:

> **"And when We made with you a covenant (saying): Shed not the blood of your people nor turn (party of) your people out of your dwellings. Then ye ratified (Our covenant) and ye were witnesses (thereto). "Yet it is you who slay each other and drive out party of your people from their homes,**

supporting one another against them by sin and transgression - and if they come to you as captives ye would ransom them, whereas their expulsion was itself unlawful for you.[Qur'an 2:84-5]

The Jews of Madinah had their dwellings in their own separate localities in different parts of the city. When Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraydha forced Bani Qaynuqaa' to relocate their settlement in the outskirts of the town, they took up their quarters in a section of the city. Bani an-Nadir had their habitation in the higher parts, some four or five kilometers from the city towards the valley of Bathan, which houses some of the richest groves and agricultural lands of Madinah. The third Jewish tribe, Bani Quraydha, occupied vicinity known as Mehzor, which is a few kilometers to the south of the city.

The Jews of Madinah lived in compact settlements where they had erected fortifications and citadels. They were however, not independent but lived as confederate clans of the stronger Arab tribes which guaranteed them immunity from raids by the nomads. Predatory incursions by the nomadic tribes being a perpetual menace, the Jewish tribes had to always seek the protection of one or more chieftains of the powerful Arab tribes.

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE JEWS

The Jews considered themselves to be blessed with divine religion and law. They had their own seminaries,

known as Midras which imparted instruction in their religious and secular life, science, law, history and the Talmudic lore. Similarly, for offering prayers and performing other religious rites, they had synagogues where they normally put their heads together to discuss their affairs. They observed the laws brought about by the Pentateuch together with the many other rigid and uncompromising customary rules imposed by their priests and rabbis and celebrated Jewish feasts and fasted. As for example, they commemorate, on the tenth day of the month of Tishri, The Fast of the Atonement. (Banu Israel Fil-Qur'an wal Sunnah, pp. 80-81)

FINANCES

The financial relationship of the Medinan Jews with the other tribes was mainly limited to lending money on interest or on security or sequestration of personal property upon payment failure. In an agricultural region like Madinah, there was ample scope for money-lending business since the farmers very often needed capital for purposes of cultivation. (Banu Israel Fil-Qur'an wal Sunnah, pp. 80-81)

The system of lending money was not limited merely to pledging personal property as security for repayment of the loan, for the lenders very often forced the borrowers to pledge even their women and children. The following incident bears a testimony to the prevailing practices:

"Muhammed b. Maslamah said to K'ab: "Now, we hope that you will lend us a camel-load or two (of food). K'ab answered: I will do so (but) you shall pledge something with me. [The Muslims] retorted: What do you want? - (K'ab) replied, "Pledge your women with me". Then they responded, "How can we pledge our women with you, the most beautiful of the Arabs? K'ab parried, "Then pledge your sons with me. [The Muslims] countered, "How can we pledge our sons with thee, when later they would be abused on this account, and people would say: "They have been pledged for a camel-load or two (of food)! This would disgrace us! We shall, however, pledge our armor with you.

Such transactions produced naturally, enough hatred and repugnance between the mortgagees and the mortgagors, particularly since the Arabs were known to be sensitive where the honor of their womenfolk is concerned.

Concentration of capital in the hands of the Jews had given them power to exercise economic pressure on the social economy of the city. The markets were at their mercy. They rigged the market through hoarding, thereby creating artificial shortages and causing the rise and fall in prices. Most of the people in Madinah detested the Jews owing to such malpractices of usury and profiteering, which were against the substance of the common Arabs. (Banu Israel Fil-Qur'an wal-Sunnah, p. 79)

The Jews, in their social transactions with the Arab tribes, Aus and Khazraj, spent lavishly, though judiciously, in creating a rift between the two tribes. On a number of occasions in the past, they had successfully pitted one tribe against the other, leaving both tribes worn out and economically ruined in the end. The only objective Jews had set before themselves was how to maintain their economic dominion over Medinah.

An incident related by Ibn Hisham that took place after Madinah became Muslim sheds light upon this strategy. Sh'ath b. Qays was an old jewish man and he felt bitter against the Muslims. He passed by a place where a number of the Prophet's companions from Aus and Khazraj were talking together. He was filled with rage seeing their amity and unity. So he asked the Jewish youth who were friendly with the Ansaars to join them and mention the battle of Bu'ath and the preceding battles, and to recite some of the poems concerning those events in order to stir up their tribal sentiments.

The cunning device of Sh'ath was not in vain, for a few years before Islam, the two tribes had been at daggers with each other. Their passions were aroused and they started bragging and quarreling until they were about to unsheathe their swords when the Prophet (ﷺ) came with some of the Muslim emigrants from Mecca. He pacified them and appealed to the bonds of harmony brought about by Islam. Then the Ansaars realized that the enemy had duped them. The Aus and Khazraj wept, embraced

and welcomed back one another as if nothing had happened. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 555-6)

For many centuries, the Jews had been waiting for a redeemer. This belief of the Jews in the coming Prophet (ﷺ), about which they used to talk with the Arabs, had prepared the Aus and the Khazraj to give their faith readily to the Prophet (ﷺ). (Dr. Mohammed Syed al-Tantawi, Banu Israel fil-Qur'an wal-Sunnah, pp. 73-101.)

The Jews of Arabia spoke Arabic although their dialect was interspersed with Hebrew for they had not completely given up their religious aspirations. In regard to the missionary activities of the Jews, Dr. Israel Welphenson says:

"There is less uncertainty about the opportunities offered to the Jews in consolidating their religious supremacy over Arabia. Had they so willed, they could have used their influence to the best advantage. But as it is too prominent among every student of Jewish history, they have never made any effort to invite other nations to embrace their faith, rather, for certain reasons, they have been forbidden to preach this to others." (Dr. Israel Welphenson; Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 72)

Be that as it may, many of the Aus and the Khazraj and certain other Arab tribes had been Judaized owing to their close social connections with the Jews or ties of blood. Thus, there were Jews in Arabia, who were of Israelite descent, with a fraction of Arab converts. The well-known poet K'ab b. Ashraf (often called an an-Nadir) belonged to

the tribe of Tayy. His father had married in the tribe of Bani an-Nadir but he grew up to be a zealous Jew. Ibn Hisham writes about him: K'ab b. Ashraf who was one of the Tayy of the sub-section of Bani Nabhan whose mother was from the Bani al-Nadir. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. P. 514).

There was a custom among the pagan Arabs that if the sons of anybody died in infancy, he used to declare to God that if his next son remained alive, he would entrust him to a Jew to rear him up on his own religion. A tradition referring to this custom finds place in the Sunan Abu Dawud.

"Ibn 'Abbaas said: Any woman whose children died used to take the vow that if her next child remained alive, she would make him a Jew. Accordingly, when Banu an-Nadir were deported they had the sons of Ansaar with them; they said, " We would not forsake our sons", thereupon the revelation came: "There is no compulsion in religion." (Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitaab-ul-Jihad, Vol. II).

AUS AND KHAZRAJ

The two great Arab tribes of Madinah, Aus and Khazraj, traced a common descent from the tribe of Azd belonging to Yemen from where successive waves of emigrants inundated the northern regions from time to time. The exodus was brought about by a variety of reasons, some of which were the unstable political conditions in Yemen, Abyssinian aggression and disruption of irrigation system supporting agriculture after the destruction of Ma'rib

dam. However, both the Aus and Khazraj came down to Madinah after the Jews. The Aus settled down in 'Awali, an area in the south-east of Madinah while the Khazraj occupied the lands in the central and northern parts of it. With the northern part of the city being low-lying, nothing intervened between the abode of the Khazraj and Harrata Wabrah in the West. (Makkah wal Madinah, p. 311).

The Khazraj consisted of four clans: Malik, 'Adiy, Mazin and Dinar, all co-laterals to Banu Najjaar and also known as Taym Al-Lat. Banu Najjaar took up residence in the central part of the city where the Prophet (ﷺ)'s mosque now stands. The Aus, who have settled in the fertile, arable lands were the neighbors of the more influential and powerful Jewish tribe. The lands occupied by Khazraj were comparatively less fertile and they had only Banu Qaynuqaa as their neighbors. (Makkah wal Madinah, p. 311).

It is rather difficult to reckon the numerical strength of Aus and Khazraj with any amount of certainty, but an estimate can be formed from different battles in which they took part after the Prophet's (ﷺ) departure to Madinah. The combatants drafted from these two tribes on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah numbered four thousand. (Al-Imta, Vol. I, p. 364).

When the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah, the Arabs were powerful and in a position to play the first fiddle. The Jews being disunited had taken a subordinate position by seeking alliance either with the Aus or the Khazraj.

Their mutual relationship was even worse for they were more tyrannical to their comrades in religion in times of clashes than to the Arabs themselves. It was due to the antipaYour and bitterness between them that the Bani Qaynuqaa were forced to abandon their cultivated lands and resorted to working as artisans. (Makkah wal Madinah, p. 322).

Physical and Geographical Conditions

At the time the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Yathrib, the city was divided into distinct sections inhabited by the Arabs and the Jews, with a separate district allocated to each clan. Each division consisted of the residential quarters and the soil used for agricultural purposes while in another part they used to have their strongholds or fortress-like structures. (Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 116)

They had fifty-nine such strongholds in Madinah. Dr. Israel Welphenson writes about these strongholds:

"The fortresses were of great importance in Yathrib for the people belonging to a clan took shelter in them during raids by the enemy. They afforded protection to the women and children who retreated to them in times of clashes and forays while the men went out to engage with the enemy. These strongholds were also utilized as warehouses for the storage of food-grains and fruits as the enemy could easily pilfer them if left in the open places. Goods and arms were also kept in such citadels and caravans carrying the merchandise used to stop near them for the markets were usually held along the doors of these fortifications. The same bulwarks also housed the synagogues and educational institutions known as Midras. The costly and valuable goods which were stored in the fortresses show that the religious scriptures were also kept in them." Jewish leaders and chieftains used to assemble in these fortresses for consultations or for taking decisions on important issues which were usually sealed

by taking an oath on the scripture" (Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, pp. 116-117)

Defining the word *Utum*, as these fortresses were called, Dr. Welphenson writes: "The term connotes, in Hebrew, to shut out or to obstruct. When it is used in connection with a wall it denotes such windows as are shut down from outside can be opened from inside. The word is also reflective of a defensive wall or rampart and with that, it is safe to presume that Utum was the name given by the Jews to their fortresses. They had shutters which could be closed from the outer side and opened from the inner side."

Yathrib was, thus, a cluster of such strongholds or fortified suburbs which had taken the shape of a town because of their proximity. The Qur'an also hints to this peculiar feature of the city in these words:

"That which Allah giveth as spoil unto His messenger from the people of the township." [Qur'an 59:7]

Again, another reference of Madinah signifies the same peculiarity.

"They will not fight against you in a body save in fortified villages or from walls." [Qur'an 59:14]

Lava plains occupy a place of special importance in the physical geography of Madinah. These plains, formed by the matter flowing from a volcano which cools into rocks of burnt basalt of dark brown and black color and of irregular shape and size, stretch out far and wide and

cannot be traversed either by foot or even on horses or camels. Two of these lava plains are more extensive; one is to the east and is known as Harrat Waqim, while the other lies in the west and is called Harrat Wabarah.

Majduddin Firozabadi writes in the Al-Maghanim al-Matabata fi Ma'alim Ut-Tabbah that there are several lava plains surrounding Medinah. The two lava plains of the east and west have virtually made the city a fortified refuge that can be attacked only from the north (where ditches were dug on the occasion of the battle of the trenches). On the southern side, the oases thickets and clumped date-palm groves as well as inter-tied houses of the densely populated area defend the city against incursion by an enemy. The strategic location of Madinah was one of the factors responsible for its selection as the émigré's new home.

Harrata Waqim, which is located east of the city and is arrayed with numerous verdant oases, was more populous than Harrata Wabarah. When the Prophet (ﷺ) emigrated to Yathrib, the more influential Jewish tribes, like, Banu an-Nadir and Banu Quraydha, were living in Harrata Waqim along with some of the important clans of Aus, such as, Banu 'Abdul Ash'hal, Banu Haritha and Banu Mu'awiya. The eastern lava plain was thus named Waqim because of a locality which boasts of the same name in the district occupied by Bani 'Abdul Ash'hal.

Religious and Social Conditions

By and large, the inhabitants of Madinah followed the Quraysh whom they held to be the guardians of the Holy sanctuary and the matrix of their religious creed as well as social ethics. Pagan like other Arabs, the population of Madinah was, by and large, devotees of the same idols as worshipped by the inhabitants of Hijaz and of Makkah in particular in addition to a few regional or tribal deities considered to be the personal or private gods of these clans. Thus, Manat was the oldest and the most popular deity of the populace of Madinah that the Aus and Khazraj honored as the co-partner of God. The idol was set up on the seashore, between Makkah and Madinah, at Mushallal near Qudayd. Al-Lat was the favorite god of the people of Ta'if while the Qurayshites revered al-Uzza as their national deity. It was so because the people of every place had a particular patron-god to which they used to get emotionally attached. If anybody in Madinah had a wooden replica of an idol, he normally called it Manat, as was the idol kept in his house by 'Amr b. Jamuh, the chief of Bani Salama in Madinah, a practice that he had cherished before his conversion to Islam.

Ahmad b. Hanbal has related a tradition from 'Urwa, on the authority of 'Aisha, which says that: "The Ansaar used to cry labbaik (Lit. At Your service) to Manat and worship it near Mushallal before accepting Islam. And anyone who performed pilgrimage in its (Manat) name did not consider it lawful to round the mounts of Safa and Marwa. When the people once inquired from the Prophet (ﷺ): "O

Messenger of Allah, we felt some hesitation during the pagan past in going round Safa and Marwah"; God sent down the revelation:

"Lo! As-Safa and al-Marwah are amongst the indications of Allah." [Qur'an 2:158]

However, we are not aware of any other idol in Madinah equally glamorized as al-Lat, Manat, al-Uzza and Hubal or venerated like them, nor was there any idol set up in Madinah which was paid a visit by the people from other tribes. Madinah does not appear to be bristling with idols, unlike Makkah where one used to set up an idol in every house and the vendors offered them for the sake of the pilgrims. Makkah was, all in all, the prototype and symbol of idolatry in Arabia whereas Madinah simply trailed behind in such respect.

In Madinah, the people used to have two days devoted to games alone. When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madinah, he said to them, **"God has substituted something better for you, the day of sacrifice and the day of breaking the fast."** (Bulugh al-'Arab)

Certain commentators of the Traditions hold the view that the two festivals celebrated by the people of Madinah were Nawroz and Mehrjan, which they had perhaps inherited from the Persians. (Saheehain)

Aus and Khazraj descended from a lineage whose nobility was acknowledged even by the Quraysh. Ansaars

were descendants of Banu Qahtan belonging to the southern stock of 'Arab 'Arbah, with whom the Quraysh had marital affinity. Hashim b. 'Abdu Manaf had married Salama bint 'Amr b. Zayd of the Banu Adiy b. al-Najjaar, which was a clan of Khazraj. Nevertheless, the Quraysh considered their own ancestry to be nobler than those of the Arab clans of Medinah. On the day of the battle of Badr, when 'Utba, Shayba, and Walid b. Rabi'a came forward and challenged the Muslims for a single combat, some youths of the Ansaar stepped forth to face them. The Qurayshite warriors, however, asked who they were and on coming to know that they belonged to the Ansaar, replied, "We have nothing to do with you." Then one of them called out, "Muhammad, send forth some of your own rank and blood to face us." Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered, **"Advance, O 'Ubayda b. Al-Harith; "O Hamza; Advance, O 'Ali. When the three were already up at them and had already told their names, the Qurayshite said: "Yes, these are noble and our peers."** (Ibn Hisham, Vol. p. 625)

The self-conceited Quraysh used to look down upon farming, the occupation employed by the Ansaar owing to the physical features of their city. We find a commensurate display of similar egotism with what Abu Jahl said when he was slain by two Ansaar lads who were sons of 'Afra. Abu Jahl said to 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud although he was nearing his end, "Would that somebody else than a cultivator had slain me!"

Economical and Cultural Conditions

Madinah was a veritable oasis. The soil was conducive to systematic cultivation and hence, its population was given over to farming and gardening. The main produce of the city consisted of grapes and dates, of which there were numerous groves, trellised and untrellised. Two or more palm-trees occasionally grew out of a single root. (See Qur'an 141 and 13:4)

Cereals and vegetables of different varieties were cultivated in the farms but the date palm remained the chief item on the menu of the people, especially in times of drought, for the fruit could be stored for sale or exchanged with other necessities. The date palm was the queen of Arabian trees, the source of prosperity concerning the people of Madinah, providing them with solid food and fodder for the camels. Its stems, barks and leaves were also utilized in the construction of houses and manufacture of other goods for daily use.

Countless varieties of date palm were grown in Madinah where the people had, through experience and experimentation, developed methods to improve the quality and production of dates. Among these was the distinction made between the male pollens and female pistils of date palms and the fertilization of ovules which was known as Tabir.

Madinah was a leading agricultural center, it had also a flourishing mercantile business though not of the same magnitude as that of Makkah. The barren, rocky valley of

Makkah allowed no other occupation save to set out with merchandise caravans regularly during the summer and winter season for their source of livelihood.

Certain industrial pursuits were restricted to the Jews of Madinah. They had probably brought the expertise to Madinah from Yemen as, for instance, Banu Qaynuqaa practiced the trade of goldsmithy. Wealthier than other tribes occupying Madinah, the houses of the Jews were flushed with money and abounded in gold and silver. (Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 128)

The soil of Madinah is excessively fertile because of the volcanic matter that made possible the surrounding lava plains. The town stands at the lower part of the valley where water courses running from the higher altitudes irrigated the agricultural lands and date-palm plantations. A verdant *wadi* well supplied with water and laden with gardens and vineyards, then known as 'Aqiq, was the pleasure spot of Madinah's residents. There were many wells scattered all over the town whereby almost every garden had one by which it was irrigated, for underground water was found to be in excess.

The vineyards and date plantations, enclosed by garden walls, were known as *ha'yet*. The wells had sweet and plentiful supply of water, which was channeled to the orchards by means of canals or through lift irrigation.

Barley was the main cereal produced in Madinah with wheat as the second one, but vegetables were grown in abundance. Transactions of different types were in vogue,

some of which were retained by Islam while others were modified or forbidden altogether.

The coins in circulation at Makkah and Madinah were similar to that of the ones mentioned in the section covering Makkah. However, as the inhabitants of Madinah had to transact their business in food grains and fruits, they had more of their dealings with measures of capacity. These quantitative measures were Mudd, S'a, Faraq, 'Araq and Wasaq. The measures of weight prevalent in Madinah were dirham, shihaq, danaq, qirat, naqwat ratl, qintar and auqiya.

Madinah had a fertile soil but it was not self-sufficient in food-grains that it had to import some of the foodstuffs required by it. Flour, clarified butter and honey were brought from Syria. At-Tirmidhi relates on the authority of Qatada b. N'uman that the staple diet of the people of Madinah consisted of dates and barley. But those who were rich used to purchase flour from the Syrian merchants for their own consumption while others had to contend with dates and barley. This report brings to light the culinary habits as well as the disparity in the standards of living of the well-to-do and the poorer sections of the society in Madinah existing before the migration of the Prophet (ﷺ).

In Madinah, the Jews constituted the affluent class while the Arab tribesman, like other naïve and guileless Bedouins, were not bothered about the future and did not even concern themselves on saving for the rainy days.

Apart from that, generosity was in their blood, which manifested itself in selflessly spending for the entertainment of their guests. Naturally enough, they were very often forced to borrow money with interest from the Jews by pledging their personal property.

The livestock raised by the people consisted, for the most part, of camels, cows and ewes. Even then, the camels were also employed for irrigating the agricultural lands wherein they are finally called as Al-Ibil un-Nawadeh when used in such manner. Madinah had several pastures, of which the two, Dhoghabata and Ghaba, were more well-known. Residents of Madinah used to put their flocks for grazing on these pasturelands, while at the same time making such grazing grounds as their source of firewood. They reared horses as well, though not in the same scale as did the inhabitants of Makkah, for military operations. Banu Sulaym were distinguished for their horsemanship although they used to import their horses from other regions.

Madinah had a number of markets, the most important of which was the one conducted by Bani Qaynuqaa which consisted of silver and gold ornaments, clothes and other handiworks, cotton and silk fabrics. Varied carpets and curtains with decorative designs were normally available in this market. Similarly, there were shopkeepers who sold ambergris and quicksilver. (Al-Taratib al-Dariyah, Vol. IV, p. 258)

The social and cultural life of the common people in Madinah was, thanks to their elegant taste, fairly well advanced. Two-storied houses were common in the region, where some of these had even attached kitchen gardens. The people were used to drinking sweet water, which had to be often conducted from a distance. Cushions were used for sitting and the household utensils included bowls and drinking vessels made of stones and glasses. Lamps were manufactured in different designs. Bags and small baskets were used for carrying commodities of daily use as well as corn from the fields.

The residences of those who were affluent were well-decorated with various other types of furniture. The jewelry worn by the womenfolk included bracelets, armlets, wristlets, earring circlets, rings, and golden or gem necklaces.

Spinning and weaving were popular domestic endeavors from which women find solace with in their spare-time at Medinah. Sewing and dyeing of clothes, house-building, brick-laying and stone crafts were some of the manual arts already known to the city folks before the Prophet (ﷺ) emigrated there.

YATHRIB'S ADVANCED AND COMPOSITE SOCIETY

The *Hijrah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions from Makkah to Madinah was, in no wise, an emigration from a

town to any hinterland known by the name of *Yathrib* but from one city to another. The new home of the émigrés was, at the same time different in many respects from the town they had left. For one, it was comparatively smaller than Makkah, but the society was more complex in comparison to the social life of Makkah. The Prophet (ﷺ) was therefore, expected to come across problems of a different scope and nature owing to the subscription of its populace to different religions offering various social codes and customs, not to forget its divergent cultural patterns. The Herculean task ahead of him was one of meeting the challenges of such a prevailing situation. By and large, only a Prophet could achieve such a feat. One who is commissioned and blest by God with wisdom, foresight, conviction and firmness of purpose and capacity to smother and blend the conflicting ideas and ideals into a new concept, one which could usher the dying humanity into a new brave and commendable world. And, above all, such arbiter or savior had to have a loveable personality. How very aptly has God set forth the services rendered by that benefactor of the human race?

> **"And** (as for the believers) **hath attuned their hearts. If You had spent all that is in the earth You couldst not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them. Lo! He is Mighty, Wise."** [Qur'an Qur'an 8:63]

Prophet in Madinah

News of the Prophet's departure from Makkah spread fast. Eagerly expecting his arrival, the *Ansaars* used to go out after morning prayers to the outskirts of the city and await his arrival until there was no more shade and the Sun became unbearable. Then, as it was the hot season, they returned to their homes, sad and disappointed.

At last, the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived. The *Ansaar* had already returned to their houses but a Jew who happened to see him, cried aloud announcing his arrival. Everybody rushed out to greet the Prophet (ﷺ) whom they found sitting beneath a tree with Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) who was of like age. Many of them had never seen the Prophet (ﷺ) and did not know which of the two was he. They crowded round both, but now, Abu Bakr realized their difficulty. He rose up, stood behind the Prophet (ﷺ) shielding him with a piece of cloth from the sun, and thus the doubts of the people dissipated. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 492)

More or less five hundred *Ansaars* rushed to pay their respects to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ); they requested him to enter the city, saying, "Ride on! You two are safe and we shall obey you!"

The Prophet (ﷺ) went on, accompanied by his companions and the welcoming crowd. The inhabitants of Madinah stood in front of their doors, the women lined up on the roofs inquiring one another about the Prophet (ﷺ). Anas said that he never came across a happier day in his life.

The people thronged in the way at their doors and windows and on the roofs of the houses. The slaves and lads cried excitedly, "*Allahu-Akbar*, the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah is come!

Bara b. Azib, who was then in his youth, had said: "I never saw the people of Madinah display warmth so great as the happiness they expressed on the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah where even the slave-girls were shouting that the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah hath arrived!"

The faithful greeted the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) with the joyful cries of Allahu Akbar. No other welcome wore that festive glance to gladden their hearts. Madinah appeared to be jubilant and beaming into a smile. The young maidens of Aus and Khazraj felt elated and sang in chorus:

"On the hillside whence caravans are given a sendoff, The full moon comes up this day. All the while Allah is praised, We had better return our thanks The Holy One, O You sent us, Yours has brought binding commands.

Anas b. Malik had not come of age when the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madina. He was present on the occasion and he says, "I never saw a day more graceful and radiant than the day when the Prophet (ﷺ) came to us." (Darimi, On the authority of Anas)

THE MOSQUE OF QUBA

The Prophet (ﷺ) stayed for four days in Quba where he laid the foundation of a mosque. He left Quba on Friday; the time for Friday prayers found him among the clan of Banu Salim b. 'Auf where he performed the prayer in their mosque. This was the first Friday prayer offered by the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) in Medinah. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 494).

IN THE HOUSE OF ABU AYYUB ANSAARI

As the Prophet (ﷺ) rode through the streets of the city, people approached him in throngs with everyone offering to accommodate him in their homes. They said, "Live with us and enjoy our wealth, honor and protection." Sometimes they took hold o his camel's halter, but he said to one and all: "Let her go her way. She is guided by Allah." This happened more than once.

While the Prophet (ﷺ) was going through the locality of Bani an-Najjaar, the slave girls of the clan recited these verses to greet him:

"Daughters of Bani Najjaar we are, What luck! Muhammed is our neighbor!"

On reaching the house of Bani Malik b. an-Najjaar, the Prophets camel knelt by herself at the place where now stands the gate of the Prophet's mosque. The place was

then used for drying the dates and belonged to two orphan boys who were related to the Prophet (ﷺ) on his mother's side.

The Prophet (ﷺ) alighted from his camel. Abu Ayyub Khalid b. Zayd, who belonged to the clan of an-Najjaar, hastily unloaded the camel and took the luggage to his house. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed with Abu Ayyub, who paid him the greatest respect and did all he could to entertain the honored guests. Abu Ayyub was loath even to live in the upper-story that he requested the Prophet (ﷺ) to occupy the place and came down with his family to live in the ground floor. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, said to him, "O Abu Ayyub, it would be more convenient for me as well as those who come to see me if I stay in the lower portion."

Abu Ayyub Ansaari was not a man of means, but he was extremely happy on having the Prophet (ﷺ) as his guest. He was beaming with joy at the great honor bestowed by Allah on him. The loving regard he paid to the Prophet (ﷺ) was an indication of his genuine gratitude to Allah and the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. "We used to prepare the evening meal for the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah, says Abu Ayyub, "and send it to him." We used to take only what was left. Umm Ayyub and I took the food from beside the part that the Prophet (ﷺ) had eaten in order to partake in its blessings. In compliance with the Prophet's preference, he lived in the ground floor, while we occupied the upper portion. Once, we broke a jar of water whereby Umm Ayyub and I mopped up the water with the only robe we

had for fear that it would drop on the Prophet (ﷺ) thereby causing him inconvenience.

Construction of the Prophet's Mosque

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent for the two boys who owned the date-store and asked them to name the price of the yard. They answered, "Nay, but we shall make thee a gift of it, O Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah!" The Prophet (ﷺ), however, refused their offer, paid them its price and built a mosque from there.

The Prophet (ﷺ) himself carried the unburned bricks for construction of the building along with the other Muslims. He is reported to have recited as he worked.

"O Allah! The true reward is the reward of the hereafter, have mercy O Allah on the Ansaars and Mujajirun." (Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 251)

Overjoyed to see the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) invoking blessings on them, the Muslims, too, sang and thanked Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) lived in the house of Abu Ayyub Ansaari for seven months. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 279)

In the meantime, the construction of the mosque and dwelling place for the Prophet's family was already completed and so he moved to live in his house.

The Muslims who had been restrained from migration by the polytheist of Makkah, continued to emigrate to Madinah until the only ones left there were those who were either forcibly detained or had apostatized. On the

other hand, not a house of Ansaar was left without the people having sworn allegiance to Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ). (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 499-500).

BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN THE ANSAARS AND MUHAAJIRUN

The Prophet (ﷺ) established bonds of brotherhood between the *Muhaajirun* and the *Ansaar* putting them under an agreement and obligation to mutual welfare, benevolence and assistance. Each *Ansaari* took a *Muhaajir* brother.

The former sometimes went so far as to give his *Muhaajir* brother half of whatever he possessed in the form of houses, assets, lands and groves. Such was the enthusiasm of the *Ansaars* to share everything with their brothers-in-faith that they divided everything into two parts to draw lots for allocating their share. In most cases, they tried to give the *Muhaajirun* the fairer portion of their property.

An Ansaari would say to his émigrant brother **"Behold, I shall divide my possessions into two halves."**

The Muhaajir, who was often an expert in commerce, would refuse and would answer, **"May Allah bless you in your family and your possessions! Just inform me of where the market is?"**

The Ansaar were magnanimous and self-denying and the Muhaajir forbearing, self-reliant."

COVENANT BETWEEN THE MUSLIMS AND THE JEWS

Shortly thereafter, the Prophet (ﷺ) got a written document, which bound the Muhaajirun and the Ansaars to a friendly agreement. The covenant made the Jews a party to the treaty that guaranteed them the freedom of their rights and obligations. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. p. 501)

THE CALL TO PRAYER

After the Prophet (ﷺ) had settled down and Islam was deeply entrenched in the soil of Madinah, the mode of calling the faithful to prayer caught the attention of the Prophet (ﷺ). He disliked the customs being employed by the Jews and Christians such as kindling fire or the use of bell and horn to summon the people to such a spiritual obligation.

Initially, the Muslims used to come by themselves for prayer at the scheduled time without any announcement or call at all. While different proposals were being considered, Allah guided the Muslims to the method of giving the call to prayer. A number of companions had a vision of the call in their dreams, which was approved by the Prophet (ﷺ) and prescribed as the official procedure of assembling the Muslims for such a worship act. Bilal Ibn Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him) was entrusted by the Prophet (ﷺ) to give the call to prayer and thus he came to be known as the muadhin of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the

leader of all those who would call the faithful to prayer ‘till the end of time.

Hypocrisy raises its head in Madinah

There was no motivation for deception and double dealing in Makkah. Islam was helpless, harried and harassed there. Moreover, none had the power to turn the tide in Makkah, nor could anyone think of gaining any worldly advantage by accepting Islam. Giving one's faith to Islam meant one was prepared to set oneself at odds with the whole of Makkah and to risk one's life. Only one venturesome in spirit and having the courage of convictions could bear to play with the fire of hostility raging in the hearts of Islam's enemies, only a man of mettle could take a chance with his life and property, future and prosperity. In Makkah, there were not two powers equally poised; the heathens were brought out forcefully by the Qur'an in its elegant style.

"And remember, when ye were few and reckoned feeble in the land, and were in fear lest men should extirpate you."

When Islam found a new safe haven in Madina and the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were blessed with peace and stability, Islam began to prosper. It brought into existence a new society, a new brotherhood of men united by the consciousness of a common outlook in life and common aspirations as expressed by the Islamic principles. The dazzling spectacle of an idealistic commonwealth meant a complete break with the past for the change was so radical so as to induce the fainthearted

to sail under false colors. This was quite logical or rather based on the natural instincts of those who could not cope with the revolutionary movement. Also, hypocrisy shows up its mettle only where two contending powers or principles are pitted against each other, for the indecisive and the spineless are always wavering, swinging from one end to another. They are always of two minds, hesitant, and never able to take a final decision. Often they hang together with one of the two contenders, profess loyalty and try to go along with it, but their self-solicitude and vested interests do not permit them to cling on and sacrifice and endure with it. The fear that the other party might recover its strength someday does not elude them, nor are they ever able to make a total break with their past for the sake of new ideas or ideals. This is a delicate state of disloyalty or infirmity of purpose portrayed graphically by the Qur'an as follows:

> **"And among the mankind is he who worshipeth Allah upon a narrow marge so that if good befalleth him, he is content therewith, but if a trial befalleth him, he falleth away utterly. He loseth both the world and the hereafter. That is the sheer loss."** [Qur'an 22:11]

The distinctive trait of this group is delineated in another verse which says:

"Swaying between this (and that), (belonging) neither to these nor to those." [Qur'an 8:26]

The leader of the hypocrites, drawn from the ranks of Aus and Khazraj as well as the Jews of Madinah, was Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Sal'ul. Exhausted by the battle of Buath that was fought between the Aus and Khazraj around five years before the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah in Madinah, both these tribes had agreed to recognize 'Abdullah b. Ubayy as their leader. By the time Islam came to gain adherents in Madinah, preparations were already being made to formally crown him as the king of the city. When he saw that the people were being won over by Islam, quickly and in large numbers at that, he became so annoyed that his resentment grew to torture his mind.

Ibn Hisham writes: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madina the leader there was 'Abdullah b. Ubayy Salul al-'Aufi. None of his own people contested his authority and Aus and Khazraj never rallied to any one man before Islam as they did to him. 'Abdullah b. Ubayy's people had made a sort of jeweled diadem to crown him and make him their king when Allah sent His Prophet (ﷺ) to them. So when his people deserted him in favor of Islam, he was filled with enmity realizing that the Prophet (ﷺ) had deprived him of his kingship. However, when he saw that his people were determined to go over the fold of Islam, he did too, though unwillingly, retaining his enmity and dissimulation. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 277-8)

All those persons who had a suppressed desire concealed in their hearts or were ambitious for prestige, power or authority, felt cut to the heart at the success of

religion that welded the *Muhaajirun* and the *Ansaar* as two bodies with one soul. A religion that inspired them with a dedication to the Prophet (ﷺ) which was even more intense than one had for one's own father, son and wife. Hatred and ill will against the Prophet (ﷺ) filled their hearts and they started hatching up plots against Muslims. This was how a coalition of the double-faced discontented ones came into existence within the Islamic world who were in reality worthless and just a parcel of the Muslim society. People no better than a lowly but dangerous snake in the grass that Muslims had to be even more careful with than to Allah's openly acknowledged enemies.

This is why the Qur'an repeatedly exposes their hypocrisy and warns against their concealed designs. Their surreptitious intrigues continued to undermine the stability of the Islamic society and hence the works on the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot do otherwise than divulge their hidden agenda and activities.

BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH ANIMOSITY

After initially maintaining an attitude of indifference and neutrality, the Jews gradually began to show their hatred and rancor against Islam. In the beginning they steered a middle course between the Muslims and the pagans and the Arab tribes of Makkah and Madinah; or, were rather inclined towards the Muslims. The Jews of Madinah had, in the beginning, felt closer to the Muslims having found a striking resemblance of their own religious

beliefs to such fundamental teachings of Islam - such as prophecy and Prophethood, belief in the Hereafter, Unity of Allah, - and their own faith. This is notwithstanding the differences in detail as well as the fact that undue veneration of certain Prophets ('alaihimus salaam) and adoption of pagan customs through their age-old association with heathens had beclouded their pristine faith in monotheism.

It was thus reasonably expected that if they did not side with the Muslims, they would at least remain non-partisan. At any rate, Islam testified the divine origin of scriptures and called upon the Muslims to have faith in all the Hebrew Prophets (ﷺ). This was later to become a fundamental tenet of faith in Islam as affirmed by the succeeding Qur'anic verse:

> **"Each one believeth in Allah and His Angels and His scriptures and His messengers - We make no distinction between any of His messengers."** [Qur'an 2:285]

Would that the Jews had understood the conciliatory mood of Islam; had it been so, the history of Islam or rather that of the world would have been entirely different today. Then Islam would not have faced the impediments it had to encounter in the dissemination of its message, especially in its initial stages, resulting from the strife between the early Muslims armed only with the strength

of their faith and the powerful and influential, educated as well as wealthy Jews of old.

This enmity can be attributed to two causes. One of these was envy and covetousness, bigotry and narrow-mindedness.

Had there been a political leader in place of the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) he would have tactfully met the Jews halfway, especially in view of their importance in the tangled politics of Madinah. Even if it were not possible to placate the Jews, a national leader would have at least avoided setting them at odds against him by concealing his ultimate objective. But, as Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he had to proclaim the truth, interdict what was forbidden and countenance no vestiges of evil and peccantliness. He had been saddled with the responsibility to deliver the message of Allah to the whole World throughout all races and nations including the Jews and Christians as well as to invite them to accept Islam regardless of its costs or consequences. This was really the path taken by all the Prophets of old--a distinctive mark only akin to them, one which is in no way followed and cherished by politicians and national leaders alike.

But, this was what the Jews detested most for it struck at the very roots of their beliefs and outlook, leading them to become hostile to Islam and the Muslims. They gave up their earlier policy of steering the middle course and decided to oppose Islam in every way possible, openly as well as through intrigues. Israel Welphenson, quoted here,

has been frank and straightforward in his analysis of the reasons for ill will between the Jews and the Muslims.

"If the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) had been restricted only to the denunciation of idolatry and the Jews had not been called upon to acknowledge his Prophethood, there would have been no conflict between the Jews and the Muslims. The Jews might have then commended and acclaimed the Prophet's doctrine of monotheism and backed him or even supported him with men and other material resources until he had succeeded in destroying the idols and effacing polytheistic creed rampant in Arabia. But this depended on the condition that he left the Jews and their religion well enough alone and not demanded the acceptance of the new Prophethood. For the bent of Jewish temperament cannot take kindly to anything that tries to seduce it from its faith, they can never acknowledge any Prophet save one belonging to Bani Israel." (Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 123)

The Jews were further shocked and agitated when some of their learned rabbis like 'Abdullah Salam, whom they held in high esteem, embraced Islam. The Jews could never imagine that a man of his stature and erudition would accept the new faith. Thus, this only served to make the Jews all the more annoyed and jealous of the Religion.

The animosity of the Jews against Islam was not such as to be content with defying or putting up a bold front

against it. Although Muslims shared their faith in monotheism, it was only but logical as well as reasonable to expect that if the Jews were called upon to give their verdict on the Prophet (ﷺ)'s faith vis-a-vis the idolatrous creed of the Quraysh, they would speak well of Islam. They would cite the soundness of its belief in one God against the multiplicity of deities taken for granted by the pagans of Makkah. But their hatred against Islam had so infuriated them that they were even willing to deny that gospel truth. Once, when some of the rabbis went to Makkah, the Quraysh asked them whether their idolatrous religion or that of the Prophet (ﷺ) was better, to which they answered: "Your religion is better off than his and you are more rightly-guided than them." The comment of Dr. Israel Welphenson on the reply given by the Jews is worth repeating here.

"But, surely, the thing for which they deserved to be reproached and which would be painful to all those who believe in the Unity of Allah. Whether they be Jews and pagan Quraishites wherein they had given preference to the religion of the Quraysh over what had been brought by the Prophet of Islam." (Al Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 142).

The same writer further goes on to say:

"Deception, mendicity and similar means for entrapping the enemy have been sanctioned by the nations for achieving a military objective in times of warfare. Yet the Jews ought not to have committed the grievous mistake of

declaring roundly that adoration of idols was preferable to the Islamic faith in the Unity of Allah. Not even if they feared to miss the distinction by doing so. For Bani Israel had, in the name of their forefathers, held aloft the banner of Allah's Unity for ages amidst heathen nations of the old, had all along braved innumerable trials and tribulations and gone through fire and blood for its sake. It was their bounden duty to sacrifice their lives and whatever they held dear to humble the idolaters and polytheists." (Al-Yahud fi Balad il-'Arab, p. 142).

As a matter of fact, the situation was sufficiently serious so as to warrant a reference in the Qur'an:

> **"Hast You not seen those unto whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given, how they believe in idols and false deities and how they say those** (Idolaters) **who disbelieve: These are more rightly guided than those who believe?"** [Qur'an 4:51]

Change of the Qiblah

The Prophet (ﷺ) as well as the Muslims had been facing Jerusalem while worshipping, that is, they regarded it as housing the Qiblah. This practice was followed for one year and four months after migrating to Madinah. It was the Prophet's desire that the Ka'bah be made the Qiblah for prayers as did the other Arab converts to Islam, for they had been holding the sanctuary at Makkah in a reverential regard since time immemorial. To them the house of worship built by Ibrahim and Ismail (عليهما السلام) was the holiest of the holy ones, incomparable in sanctity to any other sanctum or shrine. They were put to a severe test by being asked to face Jerusalem instead of the Ka'bah and they withstood this trial by dutifully obeying the divine command. Such was their devotion to the Prophet (ﷺ) that they always replied, whether they found anything to their linking or not:

"We hear, and we obey," [Qur'an 24:51]

and:

"We believe therein: The whole is from our Lord," [Qur'an 3:7]

Thus, after the faith of the earliest Muslims had been brought to a test and they had defied it successfully, the Qiblah for the prayer was changed to the Ka'bah'.

"Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witness against mankind and that the messenger may be witness against you. And We appointed the Qiblah which you formerly observed only that We might know him who followeth the messenger, from him who turneth on his heels. In truth it was a hard (test) save for those whom Allah guided." [Qur'an 2:143]

The Muslims changed their direction promptly in prayer, in compliance with divine command, towards the Ka'bah which was henceforth selected as the Qiblah for all the believers, living in any part of the World, for all times to come.

THE JEWS LASH OUT AGAINST THE MUSLIMS

It preyed upon the minds of the Jews that Islam had established itself in Madinah and was making rapid strides day after day. They were sane enough to realize that if the popularity of Islam continued unabated for an extended period of time, it would be difficult for them to stand up against their potential enemies. So they decided to put up a front against the Muslims and launched a campaign to slight, vilify and ridicule them.

The Muslims, were however, not permitted to return the tirades hurled against them. They were commanded to be

patient and forbearing as evidenced by the Qur'anic verse that says:

"Withhold your hands, establish worship" (Qur'an 4:77).

Such was the code of behavior enjoined upon them so that they might learn to disdain the world and its pleasures, become self-denying, get prepared to make nobler sacrifices, experiencing in the end obedience to Allah's commands.

Permission to Fight

The Muslims gradually amassed power and became strong enough to fight against their enemies. They were first told to resist aggression and then later on permitted to fight against the mischievous ones. But it was only a permission rather than an obligation to take-up arms against the enemies.

> **"Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is indeed able to give them victory."** [Qur'an 22:39]

EXPEDITION OF ABWA AND 'ABDULLAH B. JAHSH

In pursuance of the command given by Allah, the Prophet (ﷺ) started sending out small expeditions to discourage hostile tribes. These expeditions were not meant to launch out any attack against the enemy but simply to frighten people hostile to Islam by way of a show of force.

We shall mention here one of the earliest expeditions, led by 'Abdullah b. Jahsh, for it embodied a revelation sent down by Allah which shows that Islam does not countenance the least excesses or highhandedness even from its own followers. Islam is always fair and impartial, without any regard to persons or parties, in bringing up its verdict on every affair.

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent ‘Abdullah b. Jahsh on an expedition with eight emigrants during the month of Rajab 2 A.H. He gave him a letter with the instruction that he was not to read it until he had journeyed for two days, and then act according to the directions contained therein by leaving his companions the decision to remain with him or turn back of their own choice.

So, Abdullah b. Jahsh read the letter after having traveled for two days. The instruction contained in it was, “When you have read this letter, proceed to the oasis of Nakhlah between Makkah and Ta’if. Install your tents there to find out the movements of the Quraysh and send the information to us.”

Having gone through the letter ‘Abdullah b. Jahsh said. “We hear, and we obey;” and then he said to his ompanions. “The Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah has ordered me to lie in waiting at the oasis on the road between Makkah and Ta’if and watch the movements of the Quraysh so as to deliver news for him, but he has also asked me not to compel anyone of you to follow me. If anyone wishes martyrdom, he may come with me, and whoever wishes against it may go back, for I have abide by the instructions of the Prophet (ﷺ).” Then he went ahead, and so did all of his comrades, with none of them falling out.

The party moved on to the particular oasis where they camped. In a short while, a caravan of the Quraysh that included Amir B. Al-Hadrami passed by them. When the Qurayshites saw the party encamped near them they got

frightened but after seeing ‘Ukkasha whose head was shaved, their suspicions vanished for they regarded the party as pilgrims. They said: “Nothing to fear from them, they are pilgrims.” That was the last day of Rajab. The Muslim party on the other hand deliberated among themselves and decided that if they left the Qurayshites alone that night, they would get into the sacred area and obstruct their entry there; but if they fight them, they would be devaluing the sacred month by instituting a bloody confrontation. At first they felt hesitant as well as dismayed but ultimately made up their mind to kill as many of the Quraysh as possible and plunder as much of their goods as they could. Waqid b. ‘Abdullah at-Tamimi shot the first arrow killing ‘Amr b. al-Hadrami while his companions captured two of the Qurayshites. ‘Abdullah b. Jahsh and his companions returned to Madina with their captives.

When ‘Abdullah b. Jahsh and his companions reported the incident to the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “I did not ask you to fight in the sacred month, nor seize the caravans and take captives.” The Prophet (ﷺ) refused to accept the spoils brought to him by the transgressing group.

The campaigners were worried and fearfully apprehensive of being doomed. Besides, the other Muslims also harshly reproached them for what they had done. At the same time, Quraysh laid a charge, saying, “Lo! Muhammed has allowed war and bloodshed in the sacred months!”

It was on this occasion that Allah sent down the revelation to the Prophet (ﷺ).

> **"They question thee (O Muhammed) with regard to warfare in the sacred month. Say: warfare therein is a great (transgression), but turn (men) from a way of Allah, and to expel the people thence, is greater (sin) with Allah; for persecution is worse than killing."**
> [Qur'an 2:217]

Ibn Qayyim writes about the meaning of this verse in Zad al-Ma'ad: "Allah has given a fair deal to His friends as well as foes, for He has not commended the sin of fighting in the sacred month that was committed by His pious and devout servants. Allah has held it to be a serious act of transgression. At the same time, He reminds the idolaters that they have been guilty of even greater sins through their acts of persecution in the sacred city of Makkah, and thus they still deserve more condemnation and punishment. Since, however, the believing servants of Allah had been guilty of indiscretion or that they had committed a mistake, Allah has lent them a hope. He had given them hope that they might be forgiven on account of their faith in the Unity of Allah, submission to Him, migration with the Prophet (ﷺ) and their sacrifices towards His way." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 341)

FASTING MADE OBLIGATORY

When the Muslims had taken prayer as a mark and symbol of their faith it had been indelibly ingrained in their hearts and souls. Then it was, in the second year of Hijrah, that Allah commanded them to also observe fasting, hence:

> **"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil)."** [Qur'an 2:183]

In another verse, the Qur'an says:

> **"The month of Ramadhan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you sights the crescent, let him fast the month."** [Qur'an 2:185]

DECISIVE BATTLE OF BADR

The circumstances that led to this battle began with the news received by the Prophet (ﷺ) that a great caravan with lots of money and merchandise, was being led by Abu Sufyan on its way back to Makkah from Syria. A state of belligerence already existed between the Muslims and the Quraysh, for the Quraysh was by this time doing all that was in their power to harm and abuse the Muslims, to impede their progress, and to topple their rising power.

They were sparing none of their financial and physical resources to get on the job and their armed detachments very often penetrated deep into the limits of Madinah and its pastures to pound upon the Muslims.

As we may know that the *Muhaajiroon* have left all their houses and most of their wealth back in Makkah and as a result of that this was a good reason to capture this caravan. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked the Muslims to get ready to intercept the caravan. However, since it was a commercial caravan, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not make any elaborate arrangements for fighting, but merely positioned himself in order to catch the caravan flat-footed.

Informed of the Prophet's (ﷺ) decision to stop him, Abu Sufyan sent a courier to Makkah with an urgent request for reinforcements. Thereupon, the Quraysh ably supported and accompanied by all the notable chiefs of Makkah hastily formed an armed force. Such support group enlisted every man available therein from the neighboring tribes - and this army went forth to assist the caravan. The Quraysh were so flared up that hardly a man was left behind in Makkah.

News came to the Prophet (ﷺ) that a strong Makkan army was on its way to engage him in a battle. The Prophet (ﷺ) thereupon summoned his followers and solicited for their advice. He really wanted to ascertain the reaction of the *Ansaars*, for, their original oath of allegiance with him obliged them to defend him in Madinah and did not compel them to take part in a military expedition

outside their territory. The *Muhaajiroon* responded first and assured him of their help and loyalty. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, repeated his appeal and the *Muhaajiroon* gave similar reply but the Prophet (ﷺ) threw the same question once again for the third time. Now the *Ansaar* realized that the question was meant for them. S'ad b. Mu'ad immediately got up to say in reply, "O Prophet of God (ﷺ), it appears that the question is directed to us and you want to have our answer. Perhaps you think, O Prophet of God (ﷺ), that the Ansaar have offered to help you on their own territory only. I want to tell you in behalf of the Ansaar that you may lead us wherever you like, align with whom you may desire or break relations with whom you may think fit; you may take whatever you desire from our property and give us as much as you want; for, whatever you would take from our property would be dearer to us than what you would leave for us. We will follow whatever you command us to do. By God, if you go ahead until you reach Bark Ghimdan, we will accompany you, and by God if you march into the sea, we will also do it with you."

The battle took place on the 17th of Ramadhan, 2nd year of Hijrah. Badr is situated 160-km southwest of Madinah. The battle was between the Muslims as one side and Quraysh idolaters, where the Muslims army were consisting of 313 to 317 men with two horses and 70 camels, on the contrary Quraysh army were consisting of 1000 men with 100 horses, 6oo suits of armor, and many camels.

70 men were killed among the Quraishities army, and 70 were captured, where only 14 of the Muslims were killed.

The result of the battle was a great victory for the Muslims over their enemy.

OTHER EXPEDITIONS

The ironclad oath of Abu Sufyan, as mentioned earlier, bound him to refrain from even splashing water over his head until he had wreaked havoc on the Muslims. The chief of the Jewish tribe of Bani an-Nadir, who offered the information he desired about Madinah. Thereupon Abu Sufyan succeeded in getting away after killing two of the *Ansaars*.

The Prophet (ﷺ) got a warning of the evil raiders and went out in their pursuit. Abu Sufyan eluded the Prophet (ﷺ) but was obliged to throw away a good deal of his provisions consisting of food grains, especially parched corn or al-sawiq, and hence the expedition goes by such a name. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 144-45).

The Jews of Madinah who first broke their covenant with the Prophet (ﷺ) were Banu Qaynuqa. They contended with the Muslims and spoke scornfully of the Prophet (ﷺ). Ultimately, the Prophet (ﷺ) besieged them - the siege lasting for fifteen nights - until Banu Qaynuqa surrendered unconditionally. The attack had been instigated on the recommendation of 'Abdullah b. Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites. (Ibn Hisham Vol. II, pp. 47-49)

Banu Qaynuqa operated a market in Madinah and practiced crafts such as that of the goldsmith trade. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. p. 348)

They were forced to abandon the city although the number of people who could bear arms among them was seven hundred.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD

The reason for this battle was that Quraysh wanted to avenge their tribesmen who were killed in the battle of Badr.

It was in the middle of Shawwal, 3 A.H. near mount Uhud, which were few kilometers to the north of Madinah. The Muslim force was 700 men, two horses, and 100 suits of armor. 50 men of the Muslim army were archers. Quraysh force was 3000 men, 200 horses, and 700 suits of armor.

In the beginning the polytheists had suffered an obvious rout. The ignominious retreat of the enemy troops and their women accompanying them taking to their heels made the archers certain of their victory. Uttering shouts of glee, they deserted their posts to despoil the enemy camp. That was the main reason for the Muslim's defeat, causing them to loose 70 men, where Quraysh lost 22 only.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN THEIR OWN LIVES

In the third year after Hijrah, the tribes of ‘Adal and Qara sent an embassador to the Prophet (ﷺ) asking for scholars who could be sent to teach them the rudiments of faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent six of his companions who included ‘Asim b. Thabith, Khubayb b. ‘Adiy and Zayd b. Dathinna. When this party reached Ar-Raji,a place between ‘Usfan and Makkah, the two tribes treacherously fell on them. The Muslims took out their swords to fight against them but the assailants swore by God that they would not kill them. Three of the six Muslims replied that they could not accept any undertaking given by the pagans; so they fought and were killed. The remaining three, Zayd, Khubayb and ‘Abdullah b. Tariq surrendered. The last companion temporarily escaped during the return trip, but was later killed by one of the polytheists, while the remaining two were sold to the Quraysh. Hujayr b. Abu Ihab bought Khubayb to vindicate his father Ihab and Zayd was purchased by Safawan b. Umayya to avenge the loss of Umayya b. Khalaf.

When Zayd was taken out for execution, a number of the Quraysh including Abu Sufyan gathered to witness the barbaric spectacle. Abu Sufyan asked Zayd, “Verily, for God’s sake, O Zayd, don’t you wish that Muhammed had now been in your place and you with your family?” “By God,” replied Zayd, “I don’t wish Muhammed to be hurt even by a thorn while I should be in sweet repose with my family.” Thereupon Abu Sufyan remarked: “I have never seen any man so much adored as Muhammed is held by

his companions." Zayd was killed after that. (Ibn Hisham Vol. II, pp. 169-76, Al-Bukhaari, Kitab Ul-Maghazi).

Then they brought Khubayb to crucify him. He asked his executioners to allow him to offer two rak'ats of prayer. Having performed the prayers in complete tranquility, Khubayb said to them, "Were it not that you would think I only extended my prayer out of fear of death, I would have prolonged my prayer." Then he recited these verses:

"I fear not which side I fall apart; It's all for God who will bless the limbs that had taken part."

Khubayb was striken dead with the song of love on his lips. (Ibn Hisham Vol. II, pp. 174, Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 123-25).

BI'R MA'UNA

Another act of treachery took place shortly thereafter. A tribal chief, 'Amir b. Malik, was interested to have the doctrines of Islam explained to his people. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent 70 persons, some of whom were his eminent companions, but when they reached the place called Bi'r Ma'una, the tribesmen of Banu Sulayman, Usayya, Ri'l and Dhakwan ambushed the delegation. The Muslims fought bravely and all but one was killed. K'ab b. Zayd returned to tell the story. He died in the Battle of the Trenches. (Al-Bukhaari, Muslim and Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 186).

DYING DECLARATION OF A MARTYR

One of the Muslims who was killed treacherously on this occasion was Haram b. Milhan. The words uttered by him at the time of his death brought about the conversion of his killer Jabbar b. Salma to Islam. Jabbar used to relate later on that what led him to accept Islam was that he attacked a man with his spear and when the man saw the tip of his spear coming out if his chest, he heard him crying, "By the Lord of Ka'bah, I have succeeded!" Jabbar further says that he wondered what sort of success it was. Had he not killed the man? Jabbar enquired from others who told him that the man had meant martyrdom and thus he was convinced that his victim had truly been successful. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 187)

EXPULSION OF BANU AN-NADIR

The Prophet (ﷺ) approached Banu an-Nadir to demand a contribution to be paid as blood money to Bani 'Amir since two men had been killed inadvertently by the lone survivor of Bi'r Man'ua. Banu An-Nadir, being one of the two influential tribes of the Jews that settled in Madinah was in alliance with Bani 'Amir and was thus liable to pay such. They feigned willingness to accept the demand with pleasure, but busied themselves plotting against the Prophet (ﷺ). While the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked to make himself comfortable by the side of a wall in one of their houses, they counseled one another, saying; "Never would we get such a golden chance. If one of us drops a rock on him from the top of the house, we shall all get rid

of him." Abu Bakr, 'Ali and 'Umar and a few more companions were with the Prophet (ﷺ) on this occasion.

God informed the Prophet (ﷺ) of the treacherous plan of the Jews. He went back to Madinah and ordered to make preparations for war against the Banu an-Nadir. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) came upon them in Rabi'ul-Awwal, 4 A.H. the siege of Banu an-Nadir lasted for six nights whilst God cast terror in the hearts of the Jews. They requested the Prophet (ﷺ) that if he agreed to spare their lives, they would abandon the city with their belongings except their war implements. The offer was accepted and Banu an-Nadir departed from Madina after destroying their houses and loading all that they could on their camels. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 190-91)

The chapter of the Qur'an entitled al-Hashr (Exile) in the Qur'an calls attention to the banishment of Banuan-Nadir.

> **"He it is Who hath cause those of the People of the Scripture who disbelieved to go forth from their homes unto the first exile. Ye deemed not that they would go forth, while they deemed that their strongholds would protect them from Allah. But Allah reached them from a place whereof they reckoned not and cast terror in their hearts so that they ruined their house with their own hands and the hands of the believers. So learn a lesson. O ye who have eyes!"** [Qur'an 59:2]

Many of these exiles settled in Khaybar, the Jewish centre in the north of Hijaz, whereas others went away to the far-off Syria. And the Muslims got rid of that sneaky dark corner of deception in their midst without having to meet the Jews in an open fight. The lands and groves left by the Jews were divided up among the first Makkahn emigrants.

THE EXCURSION OF DHAT-UR-RIQ'A

In the fourth year of the Hijrah, the Prophet of God (ﷺ) decided to make an excursion into Najd. Together with six companions that included Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, he took refuge from an oasis in that area. The group had to cover the distance mostly on foot, as only one camel was at their service. The incursion was called Dhat-ur-Riq'a as the companions taking part in the expedition had to bandage their injured feet and toes. (Al-Bukhaari, Chap. Expedition of Dhat'ur-Riq'a).

The Prophet (ﷺ)'s party approached the enemy, but there was no fighting for each feared the other. The Prophet (ﷺ) led the prayer of fear in this expedition. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 204).

WHO CAN NOW SAVE YOU?

While the Prophet (ﷺ) was on his way back to Medinah, he stopped and leaned back to take rest under the shade

of a thicket of acacia trees after hanging his sword to a branch.

Jabir relates that he was taking a nap along with his friends when they heard the Prophet (ﷺ) calling them. They saw a Bedouin sitting by the side of the Prophet (ﷺ) and when they went to him, he said, "I was sleeping when this man came and took hold of my sword. As I woke-up, I saw him with the sword drawn over my head and he was asking me, 'Who can now save you from me?' I replied 'Allah.' Now he is sitting before you. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not, however, punish the Bedouin. (Al-Bukhaari, Chap. Expedition of Dhatur-Riq'a)

EXPEDITION without FIGHTING

The same year, in Sh'aban, the Prophet (ﷺ) went forth to Badr to keep his appointment with Abu Sufyan at Uhud. He remained at Badr for eight days with a large force waiting arrival of the Makkan army. Abu Sufyan did come out of Makkah to honor his call, but he did not venture to advance more than a few miles in the desert. He pursuaded his men to return since it was a season of drought in which his people were in a bad shape. There was thus no fighting and the Muslims returned with their prestige and morale bolstered higher than before.

The Prophet (ﷺ) undertook another expedition of Dumatul-Jandal a few months later. But the Muslims returned to Madinah once more without any fighting. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 209-213).

THE BATTLE OF THE TRENCHES

The reason for this battle was to eliminate the Muslims once and for all. The Jews were the real instigators of hostilities leading to the composing of this alliance.

The battle of the Trenches, or, of Al-Ahza'b (confederates) as it is sometimes called, took place in the month of Shawwal, 5 A.H. The location was Madinah itself.

The Muslim force was 3,000 soldiers, where the alliance force were 10 thousand soldiers

Seven Muslims laid down their lives in the battle of the Trenches while they killed four of the enemy, and on a cold and cloudy night, a violent hurricane from the desert uprooted the tents of the nomads and overthrew their cooking pots. The severe weather, sent by Allah, disheartened the enemy.

The battle resulted in utter defeat for the Quraysh-led alliance under Abu Sufyan and a complete triumph for the Muslims under the Great Prophet (ﷺ).

> **"O ye who believe! Remember Allah's favor unto you when there came against you hosts and we sent against them a great wind and hosts ye could not see. And Allah is ever Seer of what ye do,"** [Qur'an 33:9]

"And Allah repulsed the disbelievers in their wrath; they gained no good. Allah averted their back from the believers. Allah is strong, Mighty." [Qur'an 33:25]

ACTION AGAINST BANI QURAYDA

The reason for this battle was the treason of Bani Qurayda for their breaking their treaty withthe the Prophet (ﷺ) in order to help the Quraysh in their attack on madinah.

It took place on the end Dhul-Qidah 5 A. H., few kilometers to the southeast Madinah. The Muslim force was 3000 soldiers, and 36 horses.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and his people surrounded and occupied the district inhabited by the Jewish clan of Bani Qurayda, whereupon the beleaguered Jews defied the siege for twenty-five days, finally succumbing up to the pressure and then offered to surrender. Bani Qurayda submitted to the Prophet's decision.

The decision was made in the hands of an arbitrator which was the chief of Al-Aus (one of the Al-Ansaar clans), S'ad Ibn. Mu'adh, who gave his decision: "I decided that the men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken as captives." Al in all, round 400 soldiers of Banu Qurayda were killed.

BENEVOLENCE AND LARGE-HEARTEDNESS

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent some of his men on an excursion into Najd who captured Thumama b. Uthal, the chieftain of Banu Hanifa. When the party returned to Madinah, they tied him to a stump in the Prophet's Mosque.

God's Messenger (ﷺ) approached him and asked, "What do you expect, Thumama?"

He replied, "If you kill me, Muhammed you will kill one whose blood will be avenged; if you show me a favor, you will show it to one who is grateful; and if you want property, you will be given as much as you wish."

The Prophet (ﷺ) left him and when he passed by him the next time, he asked him the same question. Thumama repeated his earlier reply and the Prophet (ﷺ) left him again. When the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by him for the third time, he ordered Thumama to be set free.

Thumama went away to a grove of palm-dates and returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) after taking a bath. He accepted Islam and said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "I swear to God, Muhammed that there was no face on earth more detested by me than yours, but now your face is the dearest of all to me. And, I swear to God that there was no religion more hateful to me than yours in the entire world, but now the dearest of all to me. What happened to me is that your cavalry seized me when I was going to perform 'Umra."

The Prophet (ﷺ) congratulated him and bade him for it. When Thumama reached Makkah, someone asked him if he had turned a disbeliever. He replied, "No, by God, I

swore that not a grain of corn will reach you from Al-Yamamah until God's Messenger accords permission to it."

Al-Yamamah was the chief market of food grains in Arabia from where the Makkahns used to import their requirements. When Thumama went back to Al-Yamamah, he prevented the caravans from bringing wheat to Makkah. So the people of Makkah wrote to the Prophet (ﷺ) requesting him to get the ban lifted. The kind-hearted Prophet (ﷺ) asked Thumama to repeal the ban and allow the rationing and supply of food grains back to them. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 377, Saheeh Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad was Siyar)

EXPEDITION OF BANU AL-MUSTALIQ AND THE AFFAIR OF IFK

After sometime, the Prophet (ﷺ) led an expedition up to the hills and went to Dhu Qarad against Banu Lihyan in pursuit of some raiders, but there was no fighting. In Sha'ban, 6 A.H., he was informed that Banu Al-Mustaliq were plotting for an attack on him. He went out with a group to face the enemy. A large party of the hypocrites, still skeptical and reticent, accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) with their leader 'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salul. The hypocrites had never before gone out with the Prophet (ﷺ) in such large numbers in any earlier expedition. (Ibn S'ad, Kitab ut-Tabaqat al-Kabirat, Vol. II, Part I, p. 45).

The failure of the Quraysh in the battle of the Trench despite having mustered all the warriors of their confederate clans for the destruction of Islam, had made the hypocrites bitter and sour, indeed burning with hostility in their souls. The Muslims were gaining victory after victory, the star of their fortune was on the rise, and this had sent the Quraysh, the Jews and their allies in distress. They knew that they could not humble the Muslims in an open combat and hence the only way to defeat them was by sowing dissension within their ranks and pitting them against one another. They also knew that the only way they could undermine the confidence of the Muslims in Islam and its Prophet (ﷺ) as well as trigger a rift between them were debasement of the noble Prophet (ﷺ) and arousing pre-Islamic sentiments of tribal pride. With this view in mind, the hypocrites started a clandestine campaign of casting doubts upon the honor of the Prophet (ﷺ). An entirely new type of society had, however, evolved and had been in existence in Madinah at such time, whose members loved and respected every other man bound by the common ideal. These pretenders had, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that nothing could sap the foundations of this ideological fraternity more effectively than a slanderous campaign aimed at creating misgivings against the leader and his family.

Undoubtedly, this was a well-maneuvered conspiracy of the hypocrites, which was vigorously pursued during the expedition of Banu al-Mustaliq, when, for the first time, as stated earlier, a large number of them accompanied the

Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) met the enemy at a watering place of Banu al-Mustaliq, in the direction of Qudaysh towards the shore, known as al-Muraysri, where the battle brought Banu al-Mustaliq to defeat and exodus from the area. While the Prophet (ﷺ) was still at this place, a hired servant of Banu Ghifar, belonging to the Muhaajirun got into a row with another man coming from the tribe of Juhinah, which was an ally of al-Khazraj. The Juhini called out, "O ye Ansaar!" and the hired servant shouted, "O ye Muhaajirun."

'Abdullah b. Ubayy b. Salul at once flared up and said to his friends who happened to be present with him, "Didn't they dare it? They set themselves against us in our own country and tried to outnumber us. By God, it is just the same as the ancient saying: Feed the dog and it will bite you. I swear by God that when we return to Madinah those who are worthy and noble will drive out the unworthy wretches." Then, admonishing his men, 'Abdullah continued, "You have yourselves to blame for it. You allowed them to settle in your country and shared your property with them. By God, had you held back and not been so generous, they would have certainly gone elsewhere."

The Prophet (ﷺ) came to know about the incident and he at once gave orders to break the camp and then set off, although he was not accustomed to traveling at such a difficult hour. He wanted the people to get rid of the vain disputations and provocations of the devil. The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to move all day long and braved the night

till dawn extending up to the following day till the sun became annoying. He finally made a halt when the people had become so exhausted that they readily fell asleep as soon as they laid themselves over the ground.

'Abdullah was the worthy son of the unworthy 'Abdullah b. Ubayy. He rushed to Madinah ahead of the troops and waited for his father's arrival. When 'Abdullah b. Ubayy came, his son brought his camel to its knees, thereby obstructing the passage of his father whom he ordered not to enter Madinah until he had acknowledged that he was indeed an unworthy wretch while the Prophet (ﷺ) was commendable and noble. In the meanwhile, the Prophet (ﷺ) also showed up. He said to 'Abdullah, "Nay, let us deal kindly with him while he is with us." (Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. II, p. 46)

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to cast lots, whenever he intended to go on an expedition, to decide who among his wives should accompany him. In the expedition of Banu al-Mustaliq the lot had fallen on 'Aisha and she had accordingly accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ). At one of the stopovers in their journey back to Madinah, the Prophet (ﷺ) spent a part of the night before he ordered to break the camp. 'Aisha had gone to answer the call of nature, and when she came back she discovered that she had dropped her necklace. She went back to hopefully recover it, but by the time she returned the army had already left. Then the camel drivers in charge of 'Aisha's transport saddled her covered litter thinking that she was in it as usual. However, 'Aisha was small and very light, so no one

noticed that her litter was empty.

When ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) came back she found no trace of the army, so she wrapped herself in her smock and laid down in the hope that as soon as they would discover the real situation, someone would come to fetch her.

Safwan b. al-Mu’attal al-Salam, had earlier followed behind the army for a purpose. He happened to pass by ‘Aisha and stopped at her. He saw her. “Inna Lillah”, he called out, “The Prophet’s wife!” Then he brought his camel near her and turned back a few paces.

After ‘Aisha rode the dromedary, Safwan took hold of the camel’s halter and went ahead quickly in search of the army. Safwan overtook the army when it had again rested. Nobody noticed the incident, for such mishaps were not unusual in the caravans trekking the vast emptiness of the Arabian wilderness. To wayfaring Arabs, it was just a familiar misfortune and their code of honor, even in the days of pagan past, never tolerated the disgrace of their daughters. The Arabs, both pagans as well as after embracing Islam, were chivalrous enough to lay down their lives defending the honor of their women rather than to support any disgrace.

A poet of pre-Islamic days expresses the Arab sentiment of chastity and virtuousness in a couplet, which depicts a lovely picture of Arab womanhood. “If my glance meets

the looks of a neighboring maiden, I cast my eyes low until her abode takes her in".

The companions held the Prophet (ﷺ) in the same esteem and reverence as one has for one's father while the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) all served as 'Mothers of the Faithful' to every Muslim. In fact, never had any people loved anyone so dearly than how the companions cherished the Prophet (ﷺ). Safwan b. al-Mu'attal was, as they say, a man of sterling qualities---noble, true-souled and God-fearing who had the reputation of being least interested in women.

In short, nobody paid any attention to the incident and the matter would have been forgotten had not 'Abdullah b. Ubbay walked into the picture. On coming back to Madinah, 'Abdullah b. Ubayy thought it an ideal opportunity for their plans to succeed to capitalize on the adversity. He had found out, as he would though, something that he could bank upon to humiliate the Prophet (ﷺ) and his household and thus weaken Muslims' sentiments of love and admiration for him and his family. His treacherous disposition was ample enough to assure him that his shameless attack on the Prophet's honor would create sufficient misgivings to destroy even the mutual trust among the Muslims. And true enough, the crafty conspirator, had thus convinced a few circumspect Muslims who were accustomed to jumping into conclusions without verification.

'Aisha had no idea of the defamation against her. As it normally happens in such cases, she came to know of it very late, and when she did, she was bewildered. Plunged into sorrow, her anguish had kept her sobbing until tears overflowed her eyes.

The scandal was even more distressing to the Prophet of God (ﷺ). When he found out the architect of this intrigue, he proceeded to the mosque and ascending the pulpit he said, **"O ye believers, who would allow me to say something about the man, who I have come to know, has caused trouble to my family? What I know of my family is naught but good and what they say concerning a man, I have known only good about him. Whenever he enters my house, he enters with me."** The people of Aus were filled with indignation at the grief of the Prophet (ﷺ). They said, "We are prepared to behead the man, whether he belongs to Aus or Khazraj, who has given tongue to this calumny." 'Abdullah b. Ubayy belonged to Khazraj, and hence his tribesmen took the remark as an affront to tribal honor. Pent up emotions reigned until the two tribes were about to grapple with one another, but the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) calmed them down finally preventing the outbreak.

'Aisha knew her innocence. She was distressed, but was also confident and composed, so typical of the one who knows that the truth ultimately prevails in the end. She knew in the depths of her heart that God would ultimately protect her honor and bring shame to the slanderers. But it had never crossed her mind that God would send down a

revelation concerning her, which would be read in the mosques during prayers, a reality that will abide 'till the end of time. She had not waited for long when the verses attesting her innocence were sent down by God, hence:

> **"Lo! They who spread the slander are a gang among you. Deem is not a bad thing for you: nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them (will be paid) that which he hath earned of the sin; and for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be an awful doom. "Why did not the believers, men and women, when ye heard it, think good their own folk, and say: it is a manifested untruth?"** [Qur'an 24:11-12]

And thus ended the frightful menace which was forgotten completely by the Muslims of Madinah who devoted themselves once again to a great task which determines not only their own success, but that of the salvation of the entire humanity as well. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 289-302 and Al-Bukhaari)

Truce of Hudaibiyah

The Prophet (ﷺ) had a vision that he entered Makkah and circumambulated the sacred House of God. It was a true dream from God, as it would later come true, although the period, month or year of the pilgrimage had not been indicated in the vision. The companions of the Prophet were overjoyed when the Prophet (ﷺ) told them about it.

Everybody esteemed and revered Makkah and the holy sanctuary there. The opportunity of paying a visit to it had been denied to them for a very long time, but nobody ever ceased to think of the holy city. They had been longing to go on a pilgrimage to Makkah all those years and were looking forward to the day when their hearts' desire would be fulfilled. The *Muhaajirun* were especially consumed with such desire since Makkah had been their birthplace and they had lived and grown up there but they were forced to abandon it.

As soon as the Prophet (ﷺ) informed the companions of the vision, all of them started making preparations for the journey while their over-enthusiasm at the prospect of realizing the ambition of their life convinced them that they were going to call upon the house of God that very year. Almost all of them promptly agreed to accompany the Prophet (ﷺ) with hardly anyone opting to be left behind.

TRIP TO MAKKAH

It was the month of Dhul-Q'adah, in the sixth year of Hijrah, when the Prophet (ﷺ) traveled to Makkah with the intention of performing 'Umra (the lesser pilgrimage). The Prophet (ﷺ) had no intention of performing the Hajj, however. He had with him fourteen hundred companions as pilgrims, along with the sacrificial animals so that everybody would know that he was going not for war but for paying homage to the Ka'bah. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 380, Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 308).

When he neared Makkah, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent ahead a man from Khuza'a to find out the reaction of the Quraysh. When the Prophet (ﷺ) reached Usfan, a village between Makkah and Madinah, the informer came back to tell him that the tribesman of K'ab b. Luayy had assembled a strong force of nomad warriors to check his advance to Makkah. The Prophet (ﷺ), continued to drive ahead.

Upon reaching a depression in the valley of Makkah, his dromedary called Qaswa knelt down and would not get up. The men around the Prophet (ﷺ) started exclaiming, "Qaswa won't get up, Qaswa won't get up!"

But the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Qaswa has not refused, for such is not her nature. The One who restrained the elephants is keeping her back." He was referring to how Alah witheld the Ethiopian army from entering Makkah many years before. The prophet (ﷺ) continued: "I swear by Him who holds my life that if they propose anything to

me pertinent with the regard due to Allah and asked me to show kindness, I will certainly accede to their request."

The Prophet (ﷺ) then spurred the camel to move. The camel immediately sprang up on her legs, but changed her direction and started off towards Hudaybiyah. She came to a halt in a place at which end there was a ditch that had but little water. Certain persons complained to the Prophet (ﷺ) that they were thirsty. He took out an arrow from his sheath and asked them to throw it in the ditch. Thereupon, water started gushing out quenching everyone's thirst. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. p. 381).

IRRITATION OF THE QURAYSH:

The Quraysh were in a dither when they learned that the Prophet (ﷺ) had pitched his camp so near to Makkah. But as the Prophet (ﷺ) had no intention of fighting the Qurayshites, he thought it fit to send one of his companions to remove their apprehensions. He sent for 'Umar to depute him to Makkah, but 'Umar said, "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), there is none of Bani 'Adiy b. K'ab in Makkah who may protect me in case the Quraysh decided to lay hands on me." 'Umar also suggested that 'Uthman might be sent as his entire clan was there and he could very well deliver the message. 'Uthman was then summoned by the Prophet (ﷺ) and sent to the Quraysh to tell them that he had not come for war but merely for performing the 'Umrah. The Prophet (ﷺ) also asked 'Uthman to invite the Quraysh to Islam and to cheer the

believing men and women still in Makkah with the glad tidings that God was about to make their religion victorious when they would not be required to conceal their faith. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 381)

LOVE PUT TO TRIAL

Uthman went to Makkah and delivered the message of the Prophet (ﷺ) to Abu Sufyan and other leaders of the Quraysh. After the Makkans had heard the message brought by 'Uthman they said. "If you want to go round the holy sanctuary, you may do so." 'Uthman, however, replied, "I won't do so until the Prophet (ﷺ) has gone round the K'aba" (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 135)

later, after his return from Makkah, certain Muslims said to him, "Abu 'Abdullah, you have been fortunate enough to fulfill your heart's desire by going round the K'aba." Don't be unfair to me,' replied 'Uthman. "I declare by Him who holds my life that if I were detained there for a whole year and the Prophet (ﷺ) were to remain in Hudaybiyah, I would not have gone round the K'aba until the Prophet (ﷺ) had done so. Frankly speaking, the Quraysh did invite me to circumambulate the House of God, but I declined." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 382).

THE PLEDGE OF RIDHWAN

In the meantime, the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed that 'Uthman had been killed. He summoned the people to vow in avenging 'Uthman's death. Everybody gathered round the Prophet (ﷺ) impatiently. Standing under the shade of a tree, the Prophet (ﷺ) took one person at a time from the fourteen hundred standing around him to get their assurance. And after everyone had obliged to the oath, he struck one of his hands on the other, saying. "This is the pledge on behalf of 'Uthman." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. p. 382) Thus was the pledge of Ridhwan (the pledge that earned God's pleasure) taken under an Acacia tree. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

> **"Allah was well pleased with believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and hath rewarded them with a near victory."** [Qur'an 48:18]

PARLAYS, CONCILIATION AND ACCORD

The deadlock still lingered on when Buday b. Warqa' of the tribe of Khuza'a suddenly appeared with a few of his clansmen to resolve the impasse. He asked the Prophet (ﷺ) "What have you come for?"

"We have come to perform the 'Umra', replied the Prophet (ﷺ), "The Quraysh are already wrecked by war. If they agree I will make peace with them for a specified period and they should give way to my companions and

me. If they want, they may merge with the group that others have joined and this would give them a respite. But if nothing is acceptable to them except war, then by Him who holds my life, I would fight them until I lose my head or Allah makes His religion victorious."

Budayl b. Warqa conveyed to the Quraysh what he had heard from the Messenger of God (ﷺ). Urwa b. Masud al-Thaqafi, who happened to be present on the occasion, advised the Quraysh that they ought to accept the terms proposed by the Prophet (ﷺ) for they were absolutely reasonable. He also suggested that he might personally see the Prophet (ﷺ) to which the Quraysh agreed. And so, 'Urwa went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to discuss the matter with him but he also kept his eyes open to closely monitor the Muslims' treatment of the Prophet (ﷺ). He saw that if he asked for anything, they vied for complying with his order; and if he spoke, everybody listened with full attention. Nobody even dared to look straight into his eyes. When 'Urwa went back to the Quraysh, he said, "I have been to the courts of the kings and have seen the splendor of the Caesar, the Chosroes and the Negus. But never have I seen any king as revered as Muhammed was by his companions." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. p. 382) He gave the details of his assessment of the Prophet (ﷺ) and again advised the Quraysh to accept the terms offered to them.

THE TREATY OF PEACE

In the meantime another man of Bani Kinana, Mikraz b. Hafs, arrived in Makkah. He agreed with what the earlier

emissaries had advised the Quraysh and so they decided to send Suhayl b. 'Amr to negotiate the terms of the treaty. As soon as the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him coming, he murmured, "That they have sent this man, it seems that they want peace." The Prophet (ﷺ) also asked to prepare the agreement. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. Ii, p. 316; Bukhaari).

EXEMPLARY MODERATION AND PRUDENCE

The Prophet (ﷺ) summoned 'Ali and told him to write: "I begin with the name of Allah, *Ar-Rahman* 'the beneficent', *Ar-Raheem* 'the Merciful."

Suhayl protested, "I do not recognize *Ar-Rahman*, but write as is customary upon us."

The Prophet (ﷺ) then directed 'Ali, "Write: I begin with Your name, O Allah."

Some Muslims objected, 'No We must write: I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful."

But the Prophet (ﷺ) said again, "Let it be: I begin withYour name, O Allah."

Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked 'Ali to write: "This is what Muhammed the Messenger of God (ﷺ) has decided.'

Suhayl again objected, "I swear by God, if we had believed that you were God's messenger we would not have driven you away from the House of God nor fought with you; you shall write: Muhammed b. 'Abdullah."

"I am God's Messenger even if you disbelieve me", replied the Prophet (ﷺ); but still asked 'Ali to erase out what he had written earlier.

"By God, I cannot do it", replied 'Ali.

The Prophet (ﷺ), however, asked 'Ali to point out the area to be effaced. 'Ali obliged and so the Prophet (ﷺ) deleted it himself. (Muslim, Kitaab-ul-Jihad-was-siyar, Chap. Sulh Hudaybiyah).

TREATY OR TRIAL

The Prophet (ﷺ) resumed in dictating the clause; "The agreement is made that the Quraysh shall not obstruct the passage of Muslims to the House of God and shall allow them to circumambulate it."

Suhayl again raised an objection; 'I fear the Arabs would say that we have been too lenient to you in making this agreement. You can visit the K'aba next year."

The Prophet (ﷺ) agreed to include the clause in the agreement.

Suhayl then bravely suggested, "If one of us joins you, he shall be returned to us even if he professes your religion."

The Muslims were irked saying, "What? How can we return a man who seeks our shelter and approval as a Muslim?'

The deliberation was still going on when Abu Jandal b. Suhayl appeared in chains. He had escaped from Makkah and had come to the Prophet (ﷺ) by a rugged, rocky track between the passes still weighed down in fetters.

Suhayl lost no time to assert, "Muhammed, this is the first man I demand from you under the Treaty."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "But the Treaty is still being written and has not become final."

Suhayl was irritated. He cried in a huff, "If it is so, then I am not prepared to make any agreement with you."

The Prophet (ﷺ) begged again, "Let him go for my sake."

But Suhayl refused. He said, "I will not allow him to go even for your sake."

Now, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Then do as you please."

Suhayl was still growling at the mouth when he retorted, "I can do nothing."

Grieved to hear it, Abu Jandal said plaintively, "I have come as a Muslim to you, and I am being returned again to the polytheists. Do you not see what they are doing to me?" Abu Jandal had been put to severe torture for the sake of his faith. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 383;Al- Bukhaari, Bab as-Shurut fil-Jihad).

The Prophet (ﷺ) returned Abu Jandal as demanded by his father. The treaty concluded between the Muslim and the Quraysh assured that both the parties would observe a ten-year truce so that men might live in peace and that no

party would lift its hand against the other during the specified period. Another condition of the Treaty was that if anyone from the Quraysh came over to the Prophet (ﷺ) without obtaining the permission of his guardian he would be returned to them, but if anyone of those with the Prophet (ﷺ) escaped to the Quraysh, they would not be bound to return him. Yet another provision stipulated that any clan that wished to enter a bond and security with the Prophet (ﷺ), would be permitted to do so. Likewise, any tribe could resort to a similar agreement with the Quraysh. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 317-18).

FAITH PUT TO TRIAL

The terms of the agreement and the obligation to return without performing 'Umra reduced the Muslims to the most profound depression. It seemed incredible to them how the Messenger of God (ﷺ) had agreed to those biased stipulations.

So dismayed were they that 'Umar went as far as speaking his mind out. He went to Abu Bakr and asked him, "Had the Prophet (ﷺ) not told us that we would travel to the house of God and go round it?"

"Yes", replied Abu Bakr looking calmly at the sorrowful face of his friend, "But did he tell you that you would go to the House of God and go around it this very year?" (Al-Bukhaari).

Having concluded the treaty, the Prophet (ﷺ) sacrificed the animals and had his head shaved. The Muslims sat

dejected for they were feeling beaten and crushed at not being able to visit Makkah and circumambulate the Ka'bah at such a time, but when they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) performing the rites, they rushed to follow him in sacrificing the animals and shaving their heads. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 383).

IGNOMINIOUS PEACE OR SIGNAL OF VICTORY

The Prophet (ﷺ) then broke camp to return to Madina. He was still on his way back to Madinah when God confirmed that the truce of al-Hudaybiyah was not a setback but rather a signal of victory.

> **"Lo! We have given thee (O Muhammed) a signal victory, "That Allah may forgive thee of Your sin that which is past and that which is to come, and may perfect His favor unto thee, and may guide thee on a right path, "And that Allah may help thee with strong help."** [Qur'an 48:1-3]

'Umar asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "Is it a victory, O Prophet of God?"

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Yes" (Muslim)

FAILURE OR SUCCESS

Not long after the Prophet (ﷺ) had arrived in Madina, Abu Basir 'Utba b. Usaid broke away from the Quraysh

and escaped to him. He was followed by two emissaries of the Quraysh to bring him back. They reminded the Prophet (ﷺ) of the treaty given by him and he promptly handed over Abu Basir to them.

However, on his way back to Makkah, Abu Basir managed to escape from his guards and fled to the seacoast. Later on, Abu Jandal and some seventy Muslims persecuted by the Makkans also succeeded to escape from Makkah on their own and joined Abu Basir at the seashore where they established themselves along the road taken by the Quraysh for their trade with Syria. The group of Abu Basir 'Utbah now sought out the caravans of the Quraysh, robbed their property and threatened the trade route. Once again the trade of Makkah was endangered. The things got so bad that the Quraysh wrote to the Prophet (ﷺ), begging him by the ties of their kinship to him, to summon those highwaymen to Medinah and pledge to demand back no more of those who escape to him in future. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 384).

THE TREATY TURNS TO VICTORY

The events that followed proved that the truce of Hudaybiyah was a decisive step in gaining victory after victory for Islam. The Makkans had gloated over their biased treaty. The Muslims, for their part, had accepted the seemingly inglorious terms of the treaty simply because of their faith in the Prophet (ﷺ). Both parties found Islam making rapid strides soon thereafter in the

Arabian Peninsula. It put an end to the Muslims pre-occupation with the threat from Makkah and before long, it became possible to send deputation outto invite the Caesar and the Chosroes and the Negus to accept Islam. The revelation of God had come true.

> **"...though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not."** [Qur'an 2:216]

One of the benefits derived from the truce was that the Muslims were no longer perceived as exiles and outlaws, but regarded as a community worthy of Quraysh's attention with whom they had entered into a treaty as equals. The alliance offered Muslims the rightful place they deserved in the Arabian body politic. And, perhaps, even more important was the atmosphere of peace and tranquility it engendered. The unending war of attrition that had up to now been waged by the Muslims for their very existence, which had been dissipating their vigor and strength, was over. The Muslims could now avail their energies in taking the message of Islam to the un-hostile or rather ambivalent tribes of the desert. The truce provided the Muslims an opportunity to meet with other tribes and discuss Islam with the tribes thus far hostile to the Islam. They now began to discover how people who ate their food, wore their dress, spoke their language and were born and brought up in Makkah, a city like theirs, had, in

a few years, been changed into a new class of people - disdaining corruption, polytheism and idol-worship, and rejecting tribal pride, vengeance and bloodlust - a people treading the path of virtue and justice. They could now clearly see that the teachings of Islam and the guidance of the Prophet of God (ﷺ) had brought about this change of heart.

Thus, within a year of the truce, as many Arabs embraced the faith of the Prophet (ﷺ) as had not entered Islam during the last fifteen years. **"There was never a victory in Islam,"** says Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, **"greater than this. When the armistice came and war laid down its burdens, people began to meet in safety and converse together. And no intelligent man was apprised of Islam who did not enter it. Within two years of the truce as many as those, as had entered it before, embraced Islam, or even more."** (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 322)

Ibn Hisham says, "Az-Zuhri's assertion is demonstrated by the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) went to Hudaybiyah with 1,400 men according to Jabir b. 'Abdullah but two years later the Prophet (ﷺ) marched with 10,000 men for the conquest of Makkah." (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 322).

Those Muslims who had been left behind in Makkah for one reason or the other, who were harassed and persecuted by the Quraysh, succeeded, after the conclusion of the treaty, to convert a considerable number of young men to their fold until the Quraysh began to consider them as a new menace. These young men joined

the band of Abu Basir, which proved to be a new sword-arm of Islam, more dangerous in fact. The Quraysh were forced to request the Prophet (ﷺ) to summon these men to Medinah. To this, the Prophet (ﷺ) agreed, ending the distress of these poor men. All this came to happen as a result of the treaty of Hudaybiyah. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, pp. 388-89).

The attitude of peace and amiability displayed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on this occasion which demonstrated his exemplary patience and moderation, did not fail to impress the tribes which surrendered their faith to Islam. This led them to hold Islam in high esteem and to love and revere it, evoking a wholesome atmosphere for its rapid expansion without any conscious effort on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ) or the Muslims themselves.

Conquest of Makkah

The Quraysh finally broke the treaty of Hudaybia. They helped the tribe of Banu Bakr (their allies) with weapons and men against Banu Khuza'a (the Muslim's allies) in which Banu Khuza'a lost a number of their men. Banu Khuza'a appealed to the Muslims for help on the basis of their allegiance to them.

All preparations were done in secret so that the Muslims could advance upon the Quraysh by surprise, guarantee victory, and minimize the loss of lives. They were able to descend upon Quraysh unexpectedly with a military force larger and better equipped than anything Quraysh had ever seen before.

The leaders of Quraysh were shocked to see the fires of the Muslim army filling the night sky. They went out to assess the situation and were dumbstruck by the sight of the Muslims' cavalry. They were Abû Sufyân, Badîl b. Warqâ', and Hakîm b. Hazzâm.They were led to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). They very soon declared their entry into Islam and their surrender. They requested a general amnesty for Quraysh and it was granted.

The move to Makkah took place in Ramadhan, 8 A.H.; the Muslim force was 10,000 soldiers.

Allah's Messenger entered Mecca in humility, in humble devotion to Allah. When he reached the House, he broke the idols and defaced the graven images, heralding the fall of the last stronghold of idolatry, the triumph of

monotheism, and the extension of Islam's authority over the Arabian Peninsula.

BATTLE OF HUNAYN

As they began to harbor hopes of winning the laurels by bringing the Muslims upon their knees. The tribe of Hawazin saw a god-sent in the fall of Quraysh to build up their fame on the declining prestige of the Quraysh. It was the 10th of Shawwal, 8 A.H. when the army reached Hunayn (a wadi situated between Makkah and Ta'if). The Prophet (ﷺ) mobilized 12,000 soldiers, where the pagans of Hawazin came with 20,000 soldiers in addition to their women, children, and their cattle.

The result of the battle was a great victory for the Muslims over their enemy, and the captives of Hunayn numbered six thousand. The spoils included twenty-four thousand camels, forty thousand or more goats and four thousand ounces of silver.

THE BATTLE OF TA'IF

The reason for this battle was to get hold of the warriors of Thaqif who fled from Hunayn and made a retreat to Ta'if. This battle took place immediately after the battle of Hunain.

The Prophet (ﷺ), used for the first time catapults in the siege of Ta'if whose ingress and egress were completely blocked. The arrows shot by the enemy took its toll on the

lives of several Muslims (12 soldiers). The siege continued for some twenty-five to thirty nights. Allah had not willed the fall of Ta'if. So the Prophet (ﷺ) gave orders to lift the siege and depart.

THE EXPEDITION TO TABUK

The purpose of the expedition was to discourage the growing belligerence of the neighboring forces to the North with a show of strength.

The move to Tabuk took place in Rajab, 9 A.H.; Tabuk was situated halfway between Madinah and Damascus, about 700 km from Madinah. The march was against Romans and their allies of the Arabian tribes of the North. The Muslim force was 30,000 soldiers.

When the Prophet saw that there was no movement of troops by the enemy who seemed to have abandoned their military mobilization of the border towns, he gave orders for the return march; the objective of the expedition having been achieved.

THE YEAR OF DEPUTATIONS

The Prophet of God (ﷺ) felt happy on the arrival of a deputation from Tujib. They asked questions about a number of things and the Prophet (ﷺ) got the answers to their questions written for them. Then they made a request on being told more about the Qur'an and the Sunnah which caused the Prophet (ﷺ) to express fondness

for them. He instructed Bilal to entertain them well. However, they stayed but for a few days with the Prophet (ﷺ) and expressed the desire to return to their homes. When they were asked why they wanted to depart so soon, they replied, "We want to go back to tell our people how we met the Messenger of God (ﷺ), what talks we had with him and what replies he gave to our questions." Thereafter they returned and again called upon the Prophet (ﷺ) during the pilgrimage in 10 A.H. when the Prophet (ﷺ) was at Mina. (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. II, p. 43)

Deputation also called upon the Prophet (ﷺ) from Bani Fazara, Bani Asad, Bahra and 'Adhara, and all of them accepted Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) promised them the capture of Syria, but forbade them to have recourse to seers for divination of the future and commanded them to cease offering the sacrifices they had been doing hitherto. He also told them that only the sacrifice on the occasion of 'Id-ul-Adha was lawful for them. When the delegations of Bali, Dhi Murrah and Khawlan called upon the Prophet (ﷺ), he asked them about the idol of Khawlan to which they had been paying divine honors. They replied, "God bless you! God has replaced it by what has been brought by you. There are, however, a few elderly persons and senile women who are devoted to it but we will break it when we go back.

Deputations also came to the Prophet (ﷺ) from Muharib, Ghassan, Ghamid and Nakh'a. (The envoys of Arabian tribes coming to Madinah learned about Islam and its institutions, watched the graceful and genial behavior of

the Prophet (ﷺ) and benefited from the company of the Prophet's companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Tents were often set-up for them in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque from where they saw the Muslims offering prayers and reciting the Qur'an. They spoke plainly and frankly, asked whatever they wanted while the Prophet (ﷺ) replied to their questions in all sobriety, explained the wisdom of Islam and quoted excerpts from the scripture which were instrumental to their certitude and peace of heart.

THE PROPHET'S (ﷺ) CONVERSATION WITH A PAGAN

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the character of the Arabs was their openness, outspokenness or frankness to the point of being blunt and tough. The talk that Kinana b. 'Abd Yalil, a pagan chief, had with the Prophet (ﷺ) of God illustrates the brusqueness of the sons of the desert.

Kinana said, "As for adultery, we mostly remain bachelors or cannot get married, so we must need to indulge in it."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: **"That is unlawful for you. God has commanded;**

> **"and come not near unto fornication. Lo! It is an abomination and an evil way."** [Qur'an 17:32]

Kinana said again, "What you say about usury means our entire property is nothing but usury."

"You have the right," replied the Prophet (ﷺ), **"to get back the original sum lent by you for God has ordered: "O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remaineth (due to you) from usury, if ye are (in truth) believers."** [Qur'an 2:278]

"As regards wine," Kinana said further, "it is the juice of our lands and a must for us."

"Allah has forbidden it," replied the Prophet (ﷺ) and then recited the verse:

"O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed." [Qur'an 5:90]

Kinana again inquired, "What do you say about the idol *Rabbah*?"

"Break it," answered the Prophet (ﷺ).

Kinana and his companions were taken aback. They protested, "If *Rabbah* were to know that you want to break her, she would finish all of her priests!"

'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) now intervened to say, "O 'Abd Yalil, woe to you! How ignorant are you?" What else is *Rabbah* except a stone?"

Kinana and his friends replied angrily, "Ibn al-Khattab, we have not come to ask you." Then turning to the Prophet (ﷺ) he said, "You may break it, but we cannot."

"The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to them, "**I will send someone with you who will do it for you…**" "The deputation then took its leave from the Prophet (ﷺ) who gave them a send off. Before leaving for their homes they requested the Prophet (ﷺ) to appoint a leader for them. 'Uthman b. Abi al-As was selected by the Prophet (ﷺ) to act as their leader. He was the youngest among them but the Prophet (ﷺ) had noticed his keen interest in religion and he had also learned some of the Qur'an before leaving Medinah." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. IV, p.25)

COMMANDMENT FOR ZAKAT AND CHARITY

The divine commandment making it incumbent upon the Muslims to pay Zakat i.e. a tax at a fixed rate in proportion to the worth of the property was revealed in the ninth year of the *Hijrah*. (Tarikh Tabri, Vol. IV, p.724)

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent the order for collection of poor-due to all the functionaries appointed in the areas where the people had accepted Islam.

Farewell Pilgrimage

Everything had come about as willed by Allah. The faith in One God had cleansed and illuminated the souls. The devil within had been cast away together with the vileness of the pagan past. The false deities been removed from the House of God.

Once again, the believers' hearts were set on going to the holy sanctuary for it was already a very long time since they had been there. The mission of the Prophet of God (ﷺ) was also nearing completion, as he was soon to bid farewell to his loving companions. And so, Allah permitted His Messenger to take them for pilgrimage, and thus, it was the first Hajj of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Islam.

EDUCATIONAL ASPECT OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The reason for the Prophet (ﷺ) setting out from Madinah for the pilgrimage were many. He had to meet the Muslims coming from far and near; to teach them the observances of faith and the rituals of Hajj; to bear witness to the truth and thus finally redeem his pledge to God; to advise them as well as to give them final instructions: to administer them an oath to follow his teachings and to trample under his feet the last remnants of the pagan past. His pilgrimage was, in truth and reality, better than a thousand sermons and lessons. It was an itinerant school, a mosque on the move or an ongoing training center which imparted knowledge to the unenlightened,

animated the languid and indolent souls and invested the weak in spirit with the power of faith. All this was achieved under the benevolent and affectionate care of the greatest teacher, the Prophet of God (ﷺ).

UNIQUE RECORD OF THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

The minutest details of the Prophet's journey have been preserved by the most trustworthy narrators, the companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them). It is a record so authentic and detailed for never before did there exist any historical document of such comparable genuineness be that of an Emperor's itinerary or of the memoirs of any saint or scholar.

A SYNOPIS OF THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

The Prophet (ﷺ) set out from Madinah on Saturday, the 25th of Dhul Q'ada, after performing the four Noon prayer followed by a sermon in which he explained the essentials of entering the pilgrim state known as Ihram.

The Messenger of God (ﷺ) then went ahead raising his voice in praise of God: "At Your service, O God, at Your service, at Your service; You have no partner, at Your service; praise and grace art Thine, and the Dominion: You have no partner." The entire crowd chanted this Talbiya along with the Prophet (ﷺ) where some curtailed a few words while others supplemented it with a few more

in a tremor of excitement. But the Prophet (ﷺ) did not admonish them. He kept on repeating the acclamation of God until he reached ‘Araj where he encamped. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and the Prophet (ﷺ) rode on the same dromedary.

The stages in the journey ahead were at al-Abwa, the wadi of Asfan, Saraf and then Dhi tawa where he stayed during Saturday night. It was now the 4th of Dhil Hijja. The Prophet (ﷺ) offered the morning prayer at this place and also took a bath. The caravan now bent its steps towards Makkah and entered the valley from its heights. It was an hour or so before noon when his glance fell on the K’aba. He exclaimed “O God, increase the honor and estimation, deference and awe of Your House.” And then lifting up his hands, he raised his voice to say,” God is Great”. Then he said: “Peace be upon Thee, O God; peace is from Thee; O Lord, cause us to live in peace.” The first thing he did on entering the sanctuary was to go straight to the K’aba. He kissed the black stone stationed in the south-east corner, and then moved on to encompass the K’aba seven times, commencing on the right and leaving the K’aba on the left. He went round at a slow pace.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was walking at a quicker step but the paces were not long. The seamless garment in which he had wrapped himself was thrown loosely over one shoulder, the other being left bare. Each time he passed the Hajjr Aswad, he touched it with a stick in his hand and kissed it. Thereafter he proceeded to the Station of Abraham and recited the Qur'anic verse: **“Take as your**

place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to prayer);"
[Qur'an 2:125]

And then offered two units of prayer. Going back to the Hajr Aswad after the prayer, he kissed it again and then he brought himself to As-Safa from the opposite door. On reaching near As-Safa the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"Lo! As-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the signs of God. [Qur'an 2:158]

I begin with what Allah began with."

So he mounted it until he could see the House of God, declared God's Unity and proclaimed His greatness facing the Qiblah. He affirmed: "There is no god but Allah alone who has no partner, to Him belongs the dominion, to Him praises is due, and He is omnipotent, there is no god but Allah who alone has fulfilled His promise, helped His servant and alone routed the confederates."

The Prophet (ﷺ) remained in Makkah from Saturday to Wednesday. On Thursday morning he came to Mina along-with the Muslims, performed the Zuhr and 'Asr prayers and stayed there for the night. It was the night before Friday. After the sun had risen he moved for 'Arafat where he saw the tent set up for him at Namirah.

God's Messenger rested in the tent and when the sun had passed the meridian he ordered Qaswa to be brought. When it was saddled for him he went down into the valley and addressed the people wherein he explained to them the fundamental principles of Islam and struck at the

roots of polytheism and ignorance. He commanded to treat as inviolable and sacrosanct the life, honor and property of every person, as warranted by all the religions, and declared that all the usages and customs of the pagan past were abolished. The Prophet (ﷺ) abolished the usury of the pre-Islamic days although he allowed the recovery of the original sums lent to the debtors. In his sermon, the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed the rights of women, threw light on the mutual obligations of the husband and wife and bade the people to deal kindly and provide food and clothing to their spouses in a fitting manner.

Thereafter, referring to the Book of Allah he told his companions that if they hold fast to it they would never fall into error. Finally, he told them that on the Day of Judgment, Allah would ask them about him, so what reply would they give on that day. The entire congregation chorused, that they would testify that he had conveyed the message and fulfilled his mission.

Then, raising his finger towards the sky, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"O Allah, be witness",** repeating it thrice. He also asked those who are present to spread it out to those who were absent.

The sermon ended, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked Bilal to give the call to prayer. After the call was over, he performed the noon and afternoon prayers, making only two Ra'kats for each. It was then Friday, when the Prophet (ﷺ) delivered this sermon.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then mounted his camel and came to Mauqif, the place of standing, where he remained atop the camel until sunset, lamenting, beseeching and glorifying the Lord. He appeared to be tormented and disconsolate, repeatedly raising his hands in prayer to his chest, like a man bereaved and an indigent crying for his livelihood.

He was heard saying: *"O God, You hear what I say; and see where I am; and know what I conceal or reveal. Nothing can remain hidden from Thee. I am tormented, indigent and miserable, seeking refuge with thee as one who is sorrow-stricken and horrified. I acknowledge my sins and confess my faults; I call upon Thee like a beggar and cry unto Thee like an abased sinner; I beseech Thee like one who is dismayed and harassed, falling prone before Thee, and shedding tears; like one who has thrown oneself at Your feet and is licking the dust. O God, cause me not to fail in supplication to Thee; be Kind and Merciful unto me: Lo! You art the best of all those who are implored and the Most Generous of all the Bestower."*

It was then that God sent down the revelation:

> **"This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you as your religion Al-Islam."** [Qur'an 5:3]

When the disc of the sun had disappeared, the Prophet (ﷺ) took Usama up behind him and wended ahead slowly, holding the halter of his camel in a way that his head, lowered in submission to God, almost touched the saddle. The Prophet (ﷺ) was repeating the Talbiya: "At Your Service, O Allah, at Your Service…" and asking the people

to proceed slowly and gently. He kept raising his voice in Talbiya until he came to Muzdalifa. There he ordered Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) to give the call for prayers and performed the sunset prayer before the camels were rested and unloaded. He recited the night prayer after the camels were relieved and then went to take rest and slept till dawn.

Having performed the dawn prayer early in the morning, the Prophet (ﷺ) mounted on Qaswa and came to Mash'ar al-Haram, the sacred site in Muzdalifah, where he faced the Qibla, supplicated God and declared His Greatness until the morning light was clear. Thus he glorified God before the sun had risen. Then he left Muzdalifa with Fadl b. 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) up behind him on top of his camel, chanting the Talbia all the way. He asked Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) to pick up seven small pebbles for Rami Jimar. When he came to the middle of the valley of Muhassar, he urged his camel to go fast and passed the plain quickly for it was the place where punishment was inflicted upon the army of Abraha. The Prophet (ﷺ) came to Mina and from there to the Jamratul 'Aqaba There he threw the pebbles after the sun had fully risen and ended it with the recitation of Talbiya.

Returning to Mina, the Prophet (ﷺ) delivered a resolute address in which he dwelt upon the sacredness of Yaum An-Nahr and the significance Allah has assigned to the day. He elucidated the honor and distinction conferred by God on Makkah over all the cities of the world and called

upon the people to follow whoever guided them in accordance with the Book of Allah. Then, asking the people present there to learn the rites of pilgrimage from him, the Prophet (ﷺ) urged them not to revert to the ways of the infidels, beheading one another after him. He asked those present to convey everything he had told them to those who were absent.

Thereafter, he said: "Worship your Lord, offer prayers five times a day, observe fast for a month (in Ramadhan), obey those of you who are in authority and you shall enter the *Jannah* of your Lord."

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said something to his companions on this occasion which alluded to his valediction and hence the pilgrimage came to be known as the Farewell Pilgrimage.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then went to the place of sacrifice in Mina and sacrificed sixty-three camels by his own hand – the number of sacrificial camels being analogous to the number of years he remained alive. He ordered 'Ali to sacrifice the remaining excess number to make up a total of one hundred camels sacrificed on his behalf. The offering having been completed, he sent for the barber, got his head shaved and distributed his shaved hair among the people. Then he returned to Makkah on his mount and went round the Ka'bah again. After that he came near the well of Zamzam and drank its water without sitting down, and returned to Mina on the same day. He spent the night at Mina where he stayed until the sun had passed the

meridian; then he proceeded to stone the Jamrahs and starting from the first one he went on to throw pebbles on the middle Jamrah and finally on the last one. The Prophet (ﷺ) delivered two sermons at Mina, one on the Day of Sacrifice which has been mentioned earlier and the next on the day after.

The Prophet (ﷺ) remained at the place to perform the stoning of the Jamrahs on the three days after the Day of Sacrifice, known as Ayyam-I-Tashriq. Thereafter he departed for Madinah.

When the outskirts of Madinah appeared, he raised his voice to say, "Allah is Great", three times and then said, "There is no god but Allah. He is One, without any partner, to him belongs the dominion and the praise and He has power over all things. (We are) the returning and the repenting and the submitting and the worshipping; God has fulfilled His promise and helped His bondman and alone routed the confederates." (Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 249)

The Prophet (ﷺ) entered Madinah in the broad daylight.

THE ADDRESSES OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

The sermons delivered by the Prophet (ﷺ) on the Day of Arafah and on the second day of Tashriq are presented here as both are fitting and eloquent as well as significantly instructive for all and good.

"Your blood and your property are inviolable sacredness of this day in this month in this city of yours.

Lo! Everything pertaining to the days of paganism is wrongful. And claims of blood-vengeance belong to the pre-Islamic period have been abolished. The first claim on blood I remit is that of ibn S'ad Rabi'a b. al-Harith who was suckled among Bani S'ad and killed by Hudhayl.

"The usury of the days of ignorance is abolished, and the first of our usury I abolish is that of my own uncle, 'Abbas b. 'Abdul Muttalib, for all it is abolished.

"Fear Allah concerning women. Verily, you have taken them under God's security and have made their persons lawful unto you by God's Word. It is incumbent upon them that they must not bring into your houses anyone whom you dislike; but if they do that then you have authority to chastise them, yet not severely. You are responsible for providing them with their food and clothing in a fitting manner.

"I have left among you a thing, by which, if you hold to it, you will never go astray. What is that? It is the Book of Allah!

"And you would be asked by Allah about me so what would you say?"

The companions replied, with one voice, "We testify that you have conveyed the message and fulfilled your mission."

The Prophet (ﷺ) then raised his forefinger towards the sky and said thrice, "O Allah, be witness." (80)

The text of the other sermon, delivered by the Prophet (ﷺ), on the second day of Tashriq, is as follows:

O people, do you know in which city you are, what month and what day is this?" asked the Prophet (ﷺ) from his audience.

They replied, "This is the sacred month, the day has a great sanctity and the city is the holy city."

Resuming his address the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Your lives and your property and your honor shall remain scared to the Day of Resurrection like this day, this month and this city. Behold! Take it from me so that you may live. Beware! Do no wrong. Beware! Do no wrong. Beware! do no wrong! It is not lawful for you to take anything from the property of a Muslim save by his consent. Every claim for blood-vengeance and bloodwit that was due since the days of ignorance is now abolished to the Day of Judgment. And the first claim of blood-vengeance that I remit is that of Ibn Rabi'a b. al- Harith b. 'Abdul Muttalib who was suckled among Ibn Laith and killed by Hudhayl. The usury of the pagan past is abolished is that of 'Abbas b. 'Abdul Muttalib.

"Time has completed the cycle to reach the same point when God created the heavens and the earth.'

Thereafter he recited the Qur'anic verse:

> **"Lo! The number of months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are**

sacred: that is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them.' [Qur'an 9:36]

"Behold! Do not become infidels after me, beheading one another. The devil has despaired of ever being worshipped of ever being worshipped by those who pray, but he will create dissensions among you. Fear Allah concerning women. You have claims on your womenfolk and they on you. They are saddled with the obligation not to bring in anyone whom you dislike, but if you suspect, instruct and withdraw from them, and chastise them but lightly. You are obliged to provide them with food and clothing in a befitting manner for you have got them under God's security, and have a right to their person by God's word."

"Behold! Whoever holds anything in trust should return it to the person who had trusted him with it.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked, "Have I delivered the message? Thereafter he said, "Let him who is present convey it to him who is absent, for many a one to whom a message is conveyed can better enshrine it in his memory. (Ahmad, on the authority of Abu Hurra ar-Raqashi)

Eternal Rest

After the religion brought by the Prophet (ﷺ) had been made perfect and complete, Allah sent down the revelation: **"This day I have perfected your religion, completed my favors upon you, and declared Islam as your Religion"** [Soorah Al-Maaidah:3]

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) had delivered the message truthfully. He had spared no pains. He had not let any hardship or sacrifice shake him. He had brought up the people who could be trusted to live up to the spiritual heritage of the Prophets of Allah (عليهم السلام), who could shoulder the heavy responsibility of carrying the banner of Faith and Truth and to guard the message of Allah against every interpolation and mutation. Allah had even affirmed that they were capable of the obligation laid on them in the Qur'anic verse that says,

> **"Ye are the best community that hath been raised-up for mankind, ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah."** [Soorah Aali-'Imraan 110]

The Qur'an contains Allah's pure and holy truth, the source of inspiration and conviction to these people, which enjoyed the assurance of Allah from being eclipsed or from undergoing any corruption in its text.

"Verily We reveal the Reminder, and verily We are its Guardian." [Soorah Al-Hijr 9]

On the other hand, Allah's help and victory came to invigorate the Prophet (ﷺ) who saw the people entering the religion of Allah in large numbers. Delegations from Arab tribes followed one after another in rapid succession to pledge their allegiance to him. The lightning speed or the geometric growth, with which Islam gained converts, promised its victory over all religions of the world.

Allah, in Soorah an-Nasr, makes an allusion to the rapid success of Islam:

> **"When Allah's succor and the triumph cometh And You seest mankind entering the religion of Allah in troops. Then hymn the praises of Your Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him. Lo! He is ever ready to show mercy."** [Soorah An-Nasr 1-3]

RECITATION OF THE QUR'AN AND DEVOTIONS

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to retreat into his mosque for private devotions during the last ten days of Ramadan, but during the last Ramadan of his life he had secluded himself for twenty days. (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab ul-A'itika)

The Qur'an used to be reviewed by the Prophet (ﷺ) with Jibreel (Gabriel) once annually during Ramadan, but this was done twice in the year which he died. The Prophet (ﷺ) at such a time told his companions that he had some strong feelings that the time of his departure from the world was drawing near. (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab-ul-Manaqib)

No man has ever had the glowing desire to meet the Lord as possessed by the Prophet (ﷺ), and Allah now gave him permission to quit the fleeting world.

The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) held him dear like the apple of one's eye. His death was thus a shock more terrible than what they could be expected to endure. But Allah had in His infinite wisdom prepared them beforehand for that unprecedented heartache. The rumor about the Prophet's death had been circulated around in the battle of Uhud, but later on it came out that Allah had still not deprived them of the blessed companionship of His Prophet (ﷺ). Yet none of them had regarded the Prophet (ﷺ) as immortal for they knew that he would have to leave this world sooner or later. It was on that occasion that the revelation was sent down by Allah to forewarn Muslims. As the Qur'an says:

> **"Muhammed is but a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. Will it be that when he dieth or is slain, ye will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth not hurt Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful."** [Soorah Aali-'Imraan 144]

The earliest Muslims had been guided, trained and set right by the Prophet (ﷺ). Their hearts were harmonized with Allah and they were all put in harness at the great task of spreading the message of Islam to the farthest corners of the world. And they never had any doubt that the Prophet (ﷺ) would one day be summoned by the Lord

in order to be recompensed for the greatest service rendered by him in humanity.

The verse: **"When Allah's succor and the triumph cometh,"** had convinced the companions that it was but the first announcement of the Prophet's approaching departure from their midst. They were fully conscious of the fact that reference to the help and victory coming from Allah signified completion of the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission.

Then, when the revelation came, **"This day have I perfected your religion…",** a number of eminent companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were led to believe that the time for his final summons was drawing near. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 427)

ARDENT DESIRE FOR PROXIMITY TO ALLAH

After his return from the farewell pilgrimage, a number of things done by the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated that he was approaching the journey's end (82) and he was now making preparations for meeting the 'Companion Most High'. Eight years after the battle of Uhud, the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed over those who were slain there like one who was bidding farewell to the living and the dead. He then mounted the pulpit and said, "I am one who goes before you and I shall be a witness to you. Your appointed place is at the Haud-I-Kauthar (83) where I find myself standing. I have been given the keys of the treasure of the earth, and I do not fear for you that you would become

polytheists after I am gone, but I fear lest you should long for worldly things and strike each other's necks."

BEGINNING OF THE ILLNESS

The sickness of the Prophet (ﷺ) began shortly before the end of Safar. Late in one night, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to the cemetery of Madinah, known as Jannatul Baqi, where he prayed for the dead and returned to his house. The next morning his ailment began.

'Aisha relates that when the Prophet (ﷺ) returned from the Jannatul Baqi he was suffering from a headache and was muttering, "O my head." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Nay, O my head! 'Aisha, O my head!" His pain increased. Then, in the house of Maymuna the Prophet (ﷺ) called his wives and asked their permission to be nursed in the house of 'Aisha. All of them agreed and the Prophet (ﷺ) came out walking supported by Fad b. 'Abbas and 'Ali. He had a cloth bound on his head and his feet were dragging as he came to the house of 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). (Al-Bukhaari, Chap. Mard-un-Nabi)

'Aisha tells that during the illness from which the Prophet (ﷺ) never recovered he told her, "Aisha, I still feel pain from the food I took at Khaybar, now I feel my aorta being cut because of it."

SOLICITUDE FOR THE WELFARE OF MUSLIMS

Some of the Prophet's companions came to see him during his illness in the house of 'Aisha. He welcomed them and prayed for their guidance on the right path and invoked the help and blessings of Allah for them. Thereafter he said, "I enjoin you to fear Allah and assign you to His care after me. I am a warner unto you from Allah. Behold! Never give yourselves to arrogance and vainglory in the habitations of Allah's servants for Allah has told you and me: 'As for the Abode of the Hereafter We assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)." [Qur'an 28:83]

Then he recited another verse: "Is not the home of the scorners in Hell?" [Qur'an 39:60]

INDIFFERENCE TO THE WORLD AND WEALTH

'Aisha relates that during his illness, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked her, "Aisha, what has happened to those pieces of gold?" When she brought five or seven or nine dirhams, he took them in his hands and said, "How shall I face Allah with these in my possession? Give these away in charity."

ANXIETY FOR THE PRAYERS

While the Prophet (ﷺ) was caught in a debilitating sickness, he inquired, "Has everybody offered prayers?"

Those attending him replied, "No, O Prophet of Allah (ﷺ), they are waiting for you." He asked someone to bring water in a pan. After being served with his request, he took a bath and tried to get up, but fell unconscious. On regaining consciousness after a short while, he again asked, "Has everybody offered prayers?" They replied, "No, O Prophet of Allah, they are waiting for you." All the people were then sitting silently in the Prophet's Mosque for the night prayer. Now Abu Bakr was considerate enough and concerned with the prevailing situation that he asked 'Umar to lead the prayer. 'Umar, however, declined saying that he (Abu Bakr) was more qualified than he was. Thus, Abu Bakr's illness.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) felt a bit better he came out taking the help of 'Abbas and 'Ali for the noon prayer. As soon as Abu Bakr came to know of the Prophet's arrival, he tried to step back, but the Prophet (ﷺ) directed him not to leave his place and asked the two who were supporting him to let him take the seat by the side of Abu Bakr. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) performed the prayer sitting while Abu Bakr kept standing in the prayer.

Umm Al-Fadl ibn al-Harith says that she had heard Allah's Messenger reciting Soorah al-Mursalat at the sunset prayer. Thereafter he did not lead any prayer until Allah summoned him to His presence. (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab us-Salat)

AN ADDRESS

Of the few occasions when the Prophet (ﷺ) made for the pulpit during his illness, he once said while a cloth was tied around his head. **"Behold, Allah gave to His bondmen the choice between this world and that which is with Him, so he chose that which is with Allah."** Abu Bakr saw the significance of the Prophet's word, for he knew that it was the Prophet (ﷺ) himself who had been given that choice. He broke into tears and exclaimed, "Nay, may our own lives and our children be your ransom.'

The Prophet (ﷺ) then replied, "Abu Bakr, have patience and don't be hasty. Indeed, of all the people, the most generous toward me in regard to his life and property was Abu Bakr. And, were I to choose anyone to be my dearest friend, indeed I would choose Abu Bakr. But the love and concern for Islam takes precedence above all others." The Prophet (ﷺ) also said in this occasion, "There shall be left open no door of the mosque save Abu Bakr's". (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab Us-Salat)

DIRECTIVES FOR KINDLINESS TO THE ANSAAR

'Abbaas and company happened to pass by a group of Ansaar. They saw them weeping and asked, "What makes you weep?" They answered, "We have been recalling our meetings with the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ)." When the Prophet (ﷺ) was informed of the incident, he came out, the end of his mantle wound round his head, and mounted the pulpit. He did not mount the pulpit again after that

day when he praised Allah and extolled Him. Then he said, "I commend the Ansaar to you, for, behold, they are my intimates and bosom friends. They have fulfilled their duty, and now whatever claims they have on others remain to be requited. Therefore, you shall welcome whatever is done by the good among them, and forgive those that do wrong." (Al-Bukhaari, Fada'il Ashab)

LAST LOOK AT THE MUSLIMS IN PRAYER

Abu Bakr continued to lead the prayer. On a Monday morning, when the people were performing the dawn prayer, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) lifted the curtain of his door and kept his gaze fixed in the worshippers for some time to see how they paid honors to the Lord. He perhaps wanted to see the results of his life-long endeavor and struggle, training and guidance. Or, perhaps, having ever been so much fond of prayers, he wanted to know how they were enthralled and lost in prayers in his absence as they had always been in his presence. What the Prophet (ﷺ) saw was extremely satisfying. For, never had the mission of any Prophet (ﷺ) been carried out to completion in that manner. It reassured him that the attachment of the community he brought up to Allah and His religion was ever durable and undying, not transient to wear away after his death. Allah knows better how delighted he was, as his companions say, when his face was beaming with joy. They relate that "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) lifted the curtain and kept his eyes fixed upon them, standing on

'Aisha's door. It seemed as if his face was an open book. He smiled and then laughed. We thought that we might be seduced or distracted from our prayers because perhaps, he was coming out to perform the same. But he told us to complete what we were doing and then he pulled down the curtain. And that was the day on which he died." (Al-Bukhaari, Mard-an-Nabi)

INTERDICTION OF PRAYERS AT SEPULCHERS

Among the last words uttered by the Prophet (ﷺ) were: "Allah's curse is upon the Jews and Christians for having taken their Prophets' graves as places of worship."

'Aisha and Ibn 'Abbas related that when the time for the Prophet's death drew nigh, he had a black striped sheet over him. Often, he pulled it over his face and then having felt restless, removed it. It was in this condition that he said, "Allah's curse is upon the Jews and Christians for having taken their Prophets' graves as places of worship." He was warning the Muslims against such a practice.

THE LAST COUNSEL

When he was about to breathe his last, he said repeatedly **"Lo! Be careful of prayer and of those whom**

you possess or have under your charge." He continued to repeat these words until they became inaudible but it appeared that he was trying to express them. (Baihaqi and Ahmad, Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p.473)

'Ali says that he heard the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) commending the Muslims to be careful of prayer and poor-due and to be generous to their slaves and subordinates.

'Aisha relates that while she has started reciting the last two Soorahs of the Qur'an over the Prophet (ﷺ), he lifted up his eyes and said, "With the Exalted Companion! with the Exalted Companion!" Just at that moment 'Abdurahman b. Abu Bakr entered the room with a green toothstick in his hand. The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at in a way that she thought he wanted it. She chewed it a little to make it soft and pliable, and gave it to him. He rubbed his teeth with it as he used to rub before and tried to hand it over to her but it fell down from his hands.

She further says that a cup of water was kept near him. He dipped his hand in it and then wiped his face, saying, "There is no God but Allah. Verily, there are pangs of death.' Then he lifted up his forefinger and said, "With the Exalted Companion" until his soul took departed and his forefinger dropped on one side into the water.

'Aisha said that when the Prophet (ﷺ) was about to leave them behind, he had his head on her thigh. He fainted in a split second and then regaining consciousness, looked up towards the ceiling, saying all the while, "Verily, with the

Exalted Companion!" And with these words on his lips, the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah was yielding his last breath.

HOW THE PROPHET (ﷺ) LEFT THIS WORLD

When the Prophet (ﷺ) abandoned this world, he had all of Arabia well in his hand. The sovereign and rulers were scared by his rising power while his companions were ever willing to undergo any sacrifice, to lay down their own lives and to surrender up their wealth, property and children for his sake. Yet he left this world without a single dinar or dirham or a slave or a bondmaid in his possession. All that he owned at the time was one white mule, some weapons and a piece of land, which had already been given away in charity. (Al-Bukhaari, Mard un-Nabi)

The Prophet's coat of mail had been pawned to a Jew for thirty Sa's of barley (Al-Bukhaari, Mard un-Nabi) when he died and nothing was left with him to retrieve it. (Baihaqi, p. 52)

The Prophet (ﷺ) secured the freedom of forty slaves during his illness. Only six or seven dinars were left with 'Aisha, but he asked her to give away even those in charity. (Al-Siratul Halabiyah, Vol. III, p. 381)

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) relates that on the day the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) died, there was nothing in her house which could be taken by a living being except for a little barley left in a cupboard. It lasted for a few days until she weighed it, and that very day it was all used.

The Prophet (ﷺ) died on Monday, the 12th day of Rabia ul-Awwal in the heat of noon after the sun had passed the meridian. He was then sixty-three years of age. (As related by most of the Traditionists) This was the darkest hour for the Muslims, a day gloomy and lament for humanity just as his birth had signaled hope and cheerfulness for the whole world. Anas and Abu S'aid al-Khudri said that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to Madinah, everything looked better and brighter but no day was worse or darker than the day he died. Some of the people saw Umm Aymaan weeping when the Prophet (ﷺ) was bed-ridden. When they asked what had made her weep, she replied, "Of course, I know that the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) will quite leave this world but I am weeping because the revelation from heaven has come to an end." (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, pp. 544-46)

BEWILDERMENT OF THE COMPANIONS

The news of the Prophet's death fell like a thunderbolt on his companions. All were stunned because of the ardent love and esteem they had for him. Such was their reliance on his loving care as the children are assured of the protection of their parents. Their distress was not at all surprising, for Allah speaks of the Prophet's concern for his followers:

"There hath come unto you a Messenger, (one) of yourselves, unto whom aught that ye are

overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful." [Soorah At-Taubah 128]

The Prophet (ﷺ) was so gracious and considerate that his every companion believed himself to be the closest to him and never had any misgivings about his love and confidence. It was the reliance born of absolute trust mingled with devotion that had made it difficult for some of them to think of the day when the Prophet (ﷺ) would depart from this world leaving them alone. One of these was 'Umar, who had been one of the closest to the Prophet (ﷺ), and when he was told that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was already dead, he protested violently. He went so far as to address the people in the Prophet's mosque and told them that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) would not quit this world until Allah had destroyed the hypocrites. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, pp. 544-46)

THE COURAGEOUS PROCLAMATION BY ABU BAKR

(may Allah be pleased with him)

A man of determination and courage was needed at this difficult hour. And, this man was Abu Bakr, the most senior of the Prophet's companions, who had been selected by Allah to take over the legacy of the Prophet (ﷺ) with a firm hand. When the news reached him, he hurried back from his house. For a moment he stopped at the door of the mosque where 'Umar was resolutely speaking to

the people, without paying heed to anybody, he proceeded to Aisha's room where the dead body of the Prophet (ﷺ) lay covered with a mantle. He uncovered the Prophet's face and kissed it. Then, he proceeded to say "**My father and mother be your ransom. You have tasted the death Allah had decreed for you, a second death will never overtake you."**

Replacing the mantle on the Prophet's face, he then went out to the Mosque. 'Umar was still making a harangue to the people, so he said gently, "Umar, keep quiet." But 'Umar was too excited to listen to Abu Bakr.

Now, Abu Bakr realized that 'Umar was not in a mood to terminate his speech. So he stepped forward and called out to the people, whereupon they came round to him leaving 'Umar.

Abu Bakr praised Allah and then said: "O Men, if any one of you worshipped Muhammed, let him know that Muhammed is dead. But if anyone worships Allah, then Allah is alive and He will never die."

Then he recited the Qur'anic verse:

> **"Muhammed is but a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dieth or is slain, ye will turn back on your heels?" He who turneth back doth no hurt to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful."** [Soorah Aali-'Imraan 144]

All those persons who were present on the occasion later on stated on oath that when Abu Bakr recited the verse, it seemed as if it had just been revealed. 'Umar said: **"When I heard Abu Bakr reciting that verse, I was taken aback and fell down as if I did not have a leg to stand on. I felt as if I had then come to know of the Prophet's death."**

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO ABU BAKR

(may Allah be pleased with him)

All Muslims then swore faithfulness to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), in the Hall of Banu Sa'ida, as the successor of Allah's Messenger. The reason for making haste was due to old rivalries flaring up suddenly through machinations of the devil and selfishness of the faint-hearted hypocrites. Those who were sincere and well-meaning wanted to ensure that the Muslims remained united and strong under a leader, who could look after their affairs and give a burial to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as his successor and head of the Muslim community.

BURIAL OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

Normalcy returned thereafter. The initial shock and grief gave way to tranquility and confidence and the Muslims again turned to the great task for which they had been trained and prepared by the Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah. The Prophet's family members washed and covered him, and stationed the bier in his house. On this occasion, Abu Bakr informed the people that the Prophet (ﷺ) told him that every Prophet was buried on the spot where he dies. The

Prophet's bedding was accordingly removed from the place and Abu Talha Ansari then dug a grave for him at the same spot.

Then the people came to pay their last respects to the Prophet (ﷺ) and to say the funeral prayer in batches one after another. Women came in after the men followed by the children, all of whom prayed over him. Nobody acted as Imam in the prayers over the Prophet (ﷺ). (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 663)

The day this came to pass was Tuesday. (Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd; Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 517)

It was a sad day for Madinah. When Bilal gave the call for morning prayer he could not help recalling the Prophet (ﷺ) in his mind and broke down in tears and sobs. His crying tore the hearts of all others who had been part of the living. But, it was quite different now, as everything seemed to be wearisome, gloomy.

Umm Salama says, **"What a tormenting affliction it was! When we recall the distress we were in, every other trouble appears to be lighter and easier to endure.'** (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, pp. IV, p. 517)

The Prophet (ﷺ) had once said to the believers, **"O ye people! If any one of you comes to grief, he ought to console himself in his bereavement by recalling to his mind the anguish that will rend his heart on my death. For no sorrow would be greater to my followers than the agony caused to them by my death."** (Ibn Kathir Vol. IV, p. 549)

Letters to Monarchs

When the Prophet (ﷺ) expressed his desire to send letters to the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs, the companions advised him to affix his seal on the letter for the kings usually refuse to entertain the unsealed ones. The Prophet (ﷺ) accordingly stamped his letters to them with a silver seal on which was engraved:

"Muhammed the Messenger of Allah." (Al-Bukhaari, Kitab-ul-Jihad and Shamail At-Tirmidhi).

LETTERS OF THE Prophet (ﷺ)

Of the many letters sent by the Prophet (ﷺ), those written to Heraclius (the Byzantine Emperor), Chosroes II (the Emperor of Iran), Negus (the king of Abyssinia) and Muqauqis (the ruler of Egypt) are the most important.

The Prophet (ﷺ) wrote in this letter to Heraclius:

I begin with the name of Allah, the beneficient, the Merciful.

This letter is from Muhammed, the slave and Messenger of God, to Heraclius, the great King of Rome. Blessed are those who follow the guidance. Verily I call you to Islam. Embrace Islam that you may find peace, and God will give you a double reward. If you reject then on you shall rest the sin of your subjects and followers.

O people of the Book come to that, which is common between you and us; that we will serve none but Allah,

nor associate aught with him, nor take others for lords besides God. But if you turn away, then say: bear witness that we are Muslims.

The letter sent to the Chosroes II read:

I begin with the name of Allah, the beneficient, the Merciful. From Muhammed, the Messenger of God (ﷺ), to Kisra, the great King of Persia.

Peace be upon him who follows the guidance, believes in Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), bears witness that there is no God but Allah and that I am the Prophet of Allah for the entire humanity so that every man alive is warned of the awe of God. Embrace Islam that you may find peace; otherwise on you shall rest the sin of the Magis. (Al-Tabari, Vol. III, p. 90)

In the letter addressed to Negus, the Prophet (ﷺ) had written:

"I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful.

From Muhammed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to Negus, the great King of Abyssinia.

Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.

Glory be to Allah besides whom there is no God, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Peace, the Faithful, the Protector. I bear witness that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Spirit of God, and His Word that He cast unto Mary, the Virgin, the good, the pure, so that she conceived Jesus. God created him from His Spirit and His breathing as He

created Adam by His hand and His breathing. I call you to God, the Unique, without any associate, and to His obedience and to follow me and to believe in that, which came to me, for I am the Messenger of God. I invite you and your men to the Great Lord. I have accomplished my task and my admonitions, so receive my advice. peace be upon him who follows the Guidance. (Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. III, p. 15).

The Letter sent to Muqauqis, the chief of the Copts of Egypt, read:

I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammed, the Messenger of Allah, to Muqauqis, the Chief of the Coptic.

Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.

I call you to Islam that you may find peace, and God will give you a double reward. If you reject, then on you shall be the sin of your countrymen. O people of the Book, come to that which is common between you and us; that we will serve none but Allah, nor associate aught with him, nor take others for lords besides God. But if you turn away, then say: bear witness that we are Muslims."
(Mawahib Landuniyah, Vol. III. Pp. 247-48)

WHO WERE THESE KINGS ?

We cannot appreciate the solemnity and significance of the memorable step taken by the Prophet (ﷺ) unless we

realize who Heraclius, Chosroes, Negus and Muqauqis were, the extent of their dominion, prestige, splendor and might in the world during the seventh century. Anyone who is not well-aware with the political history at the time might have taken them as local rulers for so many of them are found in every country. But one who is mindful of the political state of the world in the seventh century and the power and splendor of the ambitious monarchs who had divided the world among themselves, would but arrive at one conclusion. That only a man sent by God on a mission could dare summon the imperious autocrats to put their trust in his Prophethood. Such a man should be devoid of the least doubt in the success of his sacred task, or of a speck of fear in his heart. He had to possess such a glowing conviction in the glory and majesty of God that the proudest sovereign was to him not any more than an illusory puppet going through the motions of regality. For all these reasons, it would be worthwhile to give a brief sketch of the monarchs to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had sent his epistle.

HERACLIUS (610-641)

The Byzantine empire, then calling itself "New Rome", had along with its Iranian counterpart, kept a tight hand over the civilized world for several hundred years. Its emperors ruled in direct succession to the Roman Emperors over vast and populous lands in Europe, Asia and Africa. The empire was enormously rich while its

phenomenally good armies and navies had compiled a successful military record. Coming from a Greek family, Heraclius was born in Cappadocia but was brought up in Carthage where his father was the Exarch of Africa. In his early years he never made any illusion to his fire of genius, avarice for power or qualities of leadership.

When Phocus killed the tyrant Emperor Maurice, in 602 A.D., and usurped the throne, the Chosroes of Persia declared himself the avenger of his former benefactor. The Byzantine Empire absorbed heavy losses as the Iranians reduced Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem and took away the True Cross in triumph. Soon afterwards they entered Alexandria, and Egypt too was gone. It seemed to be the end of the great Roman Empire in the East. It was then that the secret emissaries of the Senate prevailed upon the Exarch of Africa to send his son from Carthage to Constantinople. Heraclius was crowned in 610 A.D., when the Empire, afflicted by famine and pestilence, was incapable of resistance and hopeless of relief against the enemy laying a siege to the capital.

Heraclius spent the first few years of his reign beseeching the clemency of Persians and suing out peace, but in 621 A.D. he was suddenly awakened from his sloth. This was the year in which the prediction of Roman Victory, something most "distant of its accomplishment", was made by the Qur'an. In a sudden, displaying the courage of a hero, Heraclius exchanged his purple for the simple garb of a penitent and warrior and decided to become the deliverer of Christendom and restorer of the

greatness of the Eastern Empire. He began a great counter offensive and defeating the Persians of their own territory, brought his victorious arms to the capital of Iranian Empire. Amidst the triumph of his succeeding campaigns, Heraclius avenged the honor of Byzantium, crushed the arms as well as the glory of Iranian Empire until it seemed to be nearing its end.

Heraclius returned to Constantinople in 625 A.D. and then, in 629, marched in triumph to Jerusalem for restoring the True Cross to the holy sepulcher. The people went forth to meet the victor, with tears and thunderous applauses, spreading carpets and spraying aromatic herbs on his path. The glorious event was celebrated with the tumult of public joy. While the emperor triumphed at Jerusalem, he was conveyed the letter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) inviting him to embrace Islam. By that time, Heraclius seemed to have exhausted himself. He became the "slave of sloth, of pleasure, or of superstition, the careless and impotent spectator of the public calamities," as he had been in the beginning, until the new movement of Islam exploded out of Arabia and took away the very provinces Heraclius had recaptured from the Persians. The boundaries of the Byzantine Empire again shrunk to the Asia Minor and the coastal regions of the Mediterranean Sea in Europe.

The work of Heraclius was undone, but he was decidedly one of the most extraordinary and inconsistent Emperors who assumed the charge of the Byzantine

Empire. Great were his exploits and adventurous campaigns and he ruled the greatest empire of the day. In the magnitude of his dominions, wealth and military prowess, he could be compared only with Chosroes II, the Emperor of Persia. Heraclius died at Constantinople in 641 A.D. and was buried there.

CHOSROES II

Known as Khusro Parvez to the Arabs, he was the fourth son of Hormouz and the grandson of Chosroes I, Anushirvan the Just. The murder of Hormouz in 590 A.D. was succeeded by enthronement of Chosroes II, but after suffering a defeat at the hands of a rebel chief, Bahram, he had to solicit the protection of Maurice, the Byzantine Emperor. The fugitive prince was helped by Maurice with a powerful army which restored his kingdom after two fierce battles on the banks of Zab and the confines of Mada'in. While the majesty of the Persian Emperor was revived, Phocas, who promoted himself to the vacant purple, killed his adopted father, Maurice. Chosroes II decided to avenge the death of Maurice and invaded the Byzantine dominions in 604 A.D. Chosroes II continued to extend his triumphant march to Constantinople, even after the death of Phocas, rolling in the dust all the Byzantine provinces, Syria , Egypt and Asia Minor, in the rapid tide of his success.

By 616 A.D. Chosroes II had reached the summit of his victorious campaign for he seemed to announce the

approaching dissolution of the Byzantine Empire. But his insolent demands at last animated the dormant valor of Heraclius who put the Iranians to rout and penetrated into the heart of Persia. Chosroes II, had to ultimately leave his country and seek refuge in some far off place and thus the battle between the two empires came to an end in 628 A.D. Chosroes II was, according to the unanimous verdict of historians, the greatest Emperor of Iran. In the East, his writ ran up to the northwestern parts of India. (Iran ba 'Ahad Sasanian, p. 602)

During his rule, the glory and magnificence of royal court had surpassed the limits of fancy. Iran was, during this period, more than a match to any country of the world in its ostentatious living, luxury of its nobles and the splendid workmanship of its artisans. Writing about the attainments of Chosroes II, the noted Arab historian At-Tabari says: "**Made of a sterner stuff, he was the most prudent far-sighted Emperor of Persia. Deeds of valor, exploits of victory, abundance of wealth, stroke of luck and favorable circumstances had so bunched up during his reign as never before. It was for these reasons that he came to be known as Pervez which meant victorious in Arabic.**" (Tarikh Tabri, Vol. II, (Egypt), p. 137).

In the arts of civilization and ever-new innovations of edibles and drink, Iran was without any parallel. (Tarikh Tabri, Vol. II, (Egypt), p. 995) In the manufacture of perfumes it had attained perfection. The people had developed a taste for savory preparation, luscious liquors and the finest perfumes. Love of music had grown into craze, which had

stipulated its development in the reign of Chosroes II. He was so fond of amassing wealth and artifacts that when his treasures was transferred from an old building to a new one at Ctesiphon in 607-8 A.D., it consisted of 468 million Mithqals of Gold valued at 375 million gold sovereigns. In the thirteenth year of his reign, Chosroes II had 830 million Mithqals of gold in his exchequer. The reign of Chosroes II lasted up to 37 years, after which his son Sherveh took over.

MUQAUQIS

He was the Prefect as well as Patriarch of Alexandria acting as the Governor of Egypt on behalf of the Byzantine Emperor. The Arab historians normally mentioned him by his title 'Muqauqis' but they hotly dispute his personal identity. Abu Salih who wrote in the sixth century after Hijrah (12 century A.D.) gives his name as Juraid b. Mina al Muqauqis (which is corruption of George, son of Mina). Ibn Khaldun says that the then Muqauqis was a Copt while al-Maqrizi asserts that he was a Roman.

When the Persians conquered Egypt in 616 A.D., the Byzantine Prefect and patriarch was John the Almoner who fled from Egypt to Cyprus and died there. George was appointed in his place as the Archbishop of Merkite church who remained in office from 621 A.D. till his death in 630 A.D. Known to the Arab historians as Juraij, they give the year of his appointment as 621 A.D. Alfred j. Butler is of the opinion that practically seized all the Arab

historians about a person by the title of Muqauqis, appointed by the Byzantine Emperor Herculius after the recovery of Egypt from the Persians, who was both its Patriarch and Governor. They have, therefore, identified George as Muqauqis. But he also says that Muqauqis was only a title of the Patriarch since it was applied to the governor in the early Coptic manuscripts. It is also possible that some Coptic Patriarch might have assumed the ecclesiastical and political powers after the conquest of Egypt by the Persians. However, as the treaty of peace between the Romans and the Persians was executed in the year 628 A.D., the letter of the Prophet (ﷺ) was more probably received by the Patriarch of Egypt when he was more or less independent. This is why, it appears, that the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed him as the chief of the Copts.

Egypt was the most fertile dominion of the Byzantine Empire, far exceeding other provinces in population as well as in resources. It was also the granary of the Byzantine capital. When 'Amr b. al-'as entered Egypt at the head of the conquering Arab force, fourteen years after the Prophet (ﷺ) had sent his letter to Muqauqis, he wrote to Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khattab about that land: "The country is exceedingly fertile and green. Its length covers a journey of one month and its breadth is of about ten days." A census of Egypt taken by 'Amr b. al-As in 20 A.H./640 A.D. to find out the number of persons on whom jizya could be levied, showed that the population exceeded six million, one hundred thousand of which being Romans. 'Amr b. Al- As also wrote to the Caliph: "I

have taken a city of which I can but say that it contains 4,000 palaces, 4,000 baths, 40, 000 Jews and 400 theatres for the entertainment of the nobles." (Husn-ul-MUhudra by Suyuti)

NEGUS

Ethiopia is an ancient country in the eastern part of Africa lying along the coast of the Red Sea which came to be known as Abyssinia since the distant past. Its boundaries, as they existed in the seventh century, are not easy to define now. The kingdom of Abyssinia was also one of the oldest in the world. The Jewish sources denote that the queen Sheba belonged to Abyssinia and her progeny by Solomon ever ruled the country. The Jews started migrating to the country from the sixth century B.C. after the destruction of Solomon's Temple but Christianity became the dominant faith of the people by the fourth century. When the Jewish monarch of Yemen persecuted the Christians of his land, Emperor Justin I wrote to the Negus of Abyssinia to help the Christians. Negus of Abyssinia is said to have complied by sending an army which captured Yemen in 525 A.D. and retained the hold of Abyssinia over it for about fifty years.

Abraha was the viceroy of Abyssinian King in Yemen who led an army to destroy the House of God in Makkah whence came off the memorable event of *'Am al-fil* or the year of the elephant. The capital of Abyssinia was at Axum. Being a sovereign state, it was neither dependent nor a tributary to any alien power. Of course, as a

Christian country, it had friendly relations with Byzantium which was then regarded as the protector of Christendom. The Byzantine Emperor respected the independence of Abyssinia for Justinian had sent his Ambassador by the name of Julian, to the count of Axum.

De lacy O'Leary writes in the "Arabia before Muhammed" that "from 522 to the rise of Islam, the Abyssinians controlled the southern end of the Red Sea including trade with Africa, perhaps that with India as well. The official title of the King of Abyssinia was Nagusa Nagasht or King of Kings of Ethiopia. But, the name of the King to whom the Prophet sent his letter inviting him to embrace Islam has been variously mentioned in different sources. However, we have before us two kings of Abyssinia. One of these is the king during whose reign the Muslim migrated from Makkah to Abyssinia under the leadership J'afar b. Abi Talib, in the fifth year of the Prophet messengership of Muhammed (ﷺ). But it is highly improbable that the Prophet (ﷺ) wrote any letter to Negus at that time. The circumstances prevailing with the Prophet (ﷺ) at Makkah then were unfavorable for addressing such a letter to any ruler. And in any case, it was neither an appropriate time for inviting any noble or king from a foreign land to accept Islam nor did he send any such letter, according to the Traditions, to any foreign dignitary. All that the Traditions suggest is that the Prophet (ﷺ) had requested the then Negus to afford protection to the Muslims in his country for they were being severely persecuted by the Quraysh.

Similarly, the writings of Ibn Hisham and others imply that the Negus had admitted the truth of divine revelation and accepted that Jesus was a Prophet (ﷺ) and word of God cast by Him unto Mary, the mother of Jesus. In so far as the Negus to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had sent his letter is concerned, he was, according to Ibn Kathir, the King who succeeded the Negus who had been given asylum to J'afar b. Abi Talib. Ibn Kathir maintains that the letter inviting him to accept Islam was written to the Negus before the conquest of Makkah along with other monarchs. 'Ibn Kathir's view appears to be preferable for this second Negus accepted Islam, and of whose death the Prophet (ﷺ) informed the Muslims and prayed for his salvation. Waqidi and some other biographers of the Prophet (ﷺ) have stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) had prayed for the Negus after a return from Tabuk in Rajab 09, A.H. (Saheeh Muslim, Vol. V, p. 166)

The consequential circumstances of the event suggest that Waqidi is correct in holding this view and in its dating.

REACTION OF THE MONARCHS

Heraclius, Negus and Muqauqis received the letter from the Prophet (ﷺ) with all due respect that each gave a courteous reply. Negus and Muqauqis showed the highest regard to the envoys. Chosroes II was indignant, he tore the letter into pieces, saying, "My slave dares to write me thus!" When his reply was conveyed to the Prophet (ﷺ), he

said, "even so shall God shatter his kingdom to pieces." (At-Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 90-91)

Choroes II wrote to Badhan, who was his governor in Yemen, to get the Prophet sent to him in Ctesiphon. Badhan deputed Babwayh to tell the Prophet (ﷺ) what Choroes II had written to him and that he had come to take him to the King. But when Babwayh came to Medinah, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him. "God has given Sherveh power his father and he has killed Choroes II."

HERACLIUS AND ABU SUFYAN

Heraclius decided to satisfy himself about the contents of the Prophet's (ﷺ) letter. He ordered to search for a man from Arabia who could tell him about the Prophet (ﷺ). Abu Sufyan happened to be there on a business trip and so he was summoned before him. The questions raised by Heraclius on this occasion showed that he had a deep insight into the scriptures and the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) of yore and he knew how and when God sends them and the way they are usually treated by their people. Abu Sufyan, too, acted like a true Arab for he considered it below his dignity to tell the Emperor anything but truth. The conversation between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan is significant enough to be quoted here at full length.

Heraclius: Tell me about his lineage.

Abu Sufyan: He comes of the best lineage.

Heraclius: Did anybody before him make the claim he does?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Had there been any king in his family?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Who have followed him? Are they the poor and the weak or the nobles?

Abu Sufyan: They are all poor and weak.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing or deserting him?

Abu Sufyan: Their numbers are growing.

Heraclius: Do those who enter his religion despise and leave him?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Did you find him telling lies before he made the claim?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Did he ever break the word given by him?

Abu Sufyan: Not as yet, but we will see what he does in the future.

Heraclius: Did you ever fight against him?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abu Sufyan: The fortunes have varied, sometimes in our favor, sometimes in his.

Heraclius: What is it that he teaches?

Abu Sufyan: He asks to worship One God, and not associate ought with Him. To offer prayers, be virtuous to speak the truth, and be kind to the kinsmen.

Heraclius then asked the interpreter to tell Abu Sufyan: "I asked you about his lineage and you replied that it was the noblest among you. Prophets always come from the best lineage.

I asked you if any man in his family had made a similar claim and your reply was 'No.' If anybody had made a claim to Prophethood in his family, I would have thought that he was imitating him.

Then I asked if there had been a king in his family, and you said 'No.' Had it been so, I would have surmised that he was trying to recover his lost kingdom.

And I inquired if you knew him to be untruthful before making the claim, and you said 'No.' I know that it is not possible for a man to be truthful to the people but to mince the truth in regard to God.

Then I asked you if his followers were drawn from the people of rank and distinction or they were the poor and the weak, and you replied that they were humble and meek. Prophets are always followed by the humble and poor in the beginning.

And I asked if his followers were increasing and you said that they were gaining in numbers. Faith is always like that for it goes on increasing until it is triumphant.

Then I asked if anybody had turned away from him and rejected his faith and your reply was 'No'. The faith once settled in the heart never leaves it.

And then I asked if he ever broke his word and you said 'No.' Prophets never break their promises. Then I asked about his teachings and you told me that he asked you to worship One God, not to associate ought with Him; bade you to turn away from the idols and to speak the truth; and to be virtuous and to glorify the Lord.

Now, if you have told me the truth about him he will conquer the ground that is beneath my feet. I knew that a Prophet was about to be born but I had never thought he would come from Arabia. If it had been possible I would have called upon him, and if I had been with him, I would have washed his feet."

Heraclius summoned his chiefs and courtiers and got the doors of his chamber closed upon them. Then, turning he said, "Ye Chiefs of Rome! If you desire safety and guidance so that your kingdom shall be firmly established, then you follow the Arabian Prophet (ﷺ)." Whereupon they all started off but found the doors closed. When Heraclius saw them getting sore, he was despaired of their conversion, so he ordered to bring them back. He said, "What I had said before was to test your constancy and faith and I am now satisfied of your firmness and

devotion." The courtiers lowered their heads and were pleased to hear him speaking thus. Heraclius lost the golden opportunity as he preferred his kingdom over the eternal truth. As a consequence, he lost even his kingdom after a few years during the time of Caliph 'Umar.

WHO WERE THE ARISEEN?

Araisiyan or Ariseen is the word used by the Prophet (ﷺ) in his letter to Heraclius. No other letter written to any other Arab and non-Arab king and potentate contains the word whose significance is disputed by the scholars of Traditions and lexicographers. According to one version it is the plural of Arisi which means the servants and the peasants. Ibn Mandthoor makes it out as a synonym for cultivators in the Lisan-ul-Arab and cites Th'alab as the authority for holding this view. He also quotes Ibn al-'Arabi in his support while at the same time cites a quotation from Abu 'Ubayda to show that the word also means the chief or the elder who is obeyed or whose orders are carried out.

Now the question arises that if ariseen means peasants, it should have been employed to denote the subjects of Chosroes rather than the population of Byzantine Empire. The class of cultivators was by far more numerous under the Persian Empire and formed the chief source of its revenues. Ibn Manzoor has cited Azhari who says, "the people of Iraq who followed the religion of Chosroes were peasants and countrymen. The Romans were artisans and craftsmen and, therefore, they had nicknamed the Magis as Ariseen which meant that they were peasants. Arabs also used to call the Persians as fallaheen or the peasants.'

Ariseen has also been interpreted to denote Arians or the follower of Arius (280-336) who was the founder of a well-known Christian sect. The doctrine of Arius which

hovered for a long time between acceptance and rejection as the official creed of the Byzantine Empire, upheld the Unity of God and denied the co-substantiality of the Son with the father.

KHUSROE, KING OF PERSIA

When he read the letter, Khusroe tore it up and ill-treated the envoy of the Prophet (ﷺ). Then he wrote to Badhan, who was his governor in Yemen, to get the Prophet sent to him in Ctesiphon. Badhan deputed Babwayh to tell the Prophet (ﷺ) what Chosroes II had written to him and that he had come to take him to the King. But when Babwayh came to Medinah, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him, "God has given Sherveh power over his father and he has killed Chosroes II."

The prophecy of the Prophet (ﷺ) came true exactly in the way foretold by him. Chosroes' son Qubaz had by then deposed his father and seized the throne under the title of Sherveh. Chosroes II was murdered in March 628 A.D. and with him ended the glory of four hundred years old house of Sasanids. Sherveh enjoyed only six months of the fruits of his crime, and in the space of four years the regal title was transferred to ten sovereigns, in quick succession, until, the exhausted monarchy was assumed by Yazdagird III. He was the last Persian Emperor for he was soon to flee for his life before the advancing might of the Muslims. And thus was realized the Prophet's prophecy within eight years of his pronouncement.

The Prophet (ﷺ) had also said: "No more Chosroes after Chosroes dies." This portion of the prediction also came to pass with the fall of Yazdagird III.

In a few years the whole of Iran lay at the feet of the Muslims. The bulk of the population adopted Islam and there were born in Iran men with such lambent flame of intellect that proved true, word by word, what the Prophet (ﷺ) had once remarked: "If knowledge were to be found in pleiads, some of the sons of Persia would attain it."

MUQAUQIS, RULER OF EGYPT

Al-Muqauqis did not accept Islam but treated the envoy with respect and honour and sent some gifts to the Prophet (ﷺ), these included two slave-girls, one of whom was Maria who gave birth to the Prophet's (ﷺ) son Ibrahim, and a white mule which came to be known as Daldal. Al-Muqauqis kept the letter in an ivory box, which is still preserved and can be seen in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

NEGUS AL-ASHAM, KING OF ABYSSINIA

The Negus received the envoy of the Prophet (ﷺ) with great respect and showed him all the honour he deserved, and accepted Islam. He wrote a letter to the Prophet (ﷺ):

I begin with the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious.

To Muhammed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), from Negus Al-Asham ibn Abjar. Peace upon you, O Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah, and Mercy and Blessing from Allah, beside Whom there is no God, Who has guided me to Islam. I received your letter, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which you mention the matter of Jesus and, by the Lord of Heaven and Earth, he is not one scrap more than you say. We know that with which you were sent to us and we have entertained your nephew and his companions. I testify that you are Allah's Messenger, true and confirming those before you. I have given my allegiance to you and to your nephew and I have surrendered myself through him to the Lord of the Worlds. I have sent to you my son, Arha. I have control only over myself and if you wish me to come to you, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I will do so. I bear witness that what you say is true. Peace upon you, O Messenger of Allah.

The King seemed to have accepted Islam in his individual capacity but he could not convert other people of his country this is confirmed by a hadeeth of Al-Bukhaari which says that the Prophet said his funeral prayer in absentia in Madinah when he died. The second letter of the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent to his successor, who probably did not respond favorably.

The Treaties

The Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ) made many treaties with the local tribes and the chiefs of states the surrounding the Arabian Peninsula and very strictly adhered to the terms of his treaties. When once he entered into any treaty with anyone, he was never first to break the treaty. This was one of the cardinal principles of his policy. He always honored his promises and pacts with other people and advised his followers to do the same. He always enjoined upon his commanders not to break their trust. The Qur'an commands:

> **"O you who believe! Fulfil all your obligations (and trusts)."** [Qur'an 5:1]

The obligations of treaties and pacts are of far more significance than promises made to individuals. The Qur'an therefore lays great emphasis on the believers to honor them:

> **"You should not take friends from among them (the hypocrites) unless they migrate in the Way of Allah; and if they do not migrate, then seize them wherever you find them and slay them and do not take any of them as friends and helpers. However, those hypocrites are excepted who join a people who are allied to you by treaty."** [Qur'an 4:89-90]

COVENANT BETWEEN THE MUSLIMS AND THE JEWS

When Muhammed (ﷺ) came to Medinah, he found himself confronted with many problems, internal as well as external. He was faced with aggression from the Quraysh and subversion and revolt from the hypocrites and the Jews of Medinah. Shortly thereafter, the Prophet (ﷺ) got a written document, which bound the Muhaajirun and the Ansaars to a friendly agreement. The covenant made the Jews a party to the treaty that guaranteed them the freedom of their rights and obligations. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. p. 501).

He made pacts and treaties of diverse natures with the Jews, but the most significant agreement which the Prophet (ﷺ) signed was with the Jews of Medinah.

It was not only an agreement with them but a proclamation on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ). It permanently established the central authority of the Islamic State of Medinah as well as that of Muhammed (ﷺ) as the chief administrator and ruler. It also established the rule of law in the country with one legal authority and one law for all people. The main provisions of this agreement are as follows. (Ibn Ishaq, The Life of Muhammed, pp231-235).

I begin with the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious

1. This is a document from Muhammed the Prophet (ﷺ) governing the relations between the believers and Muslims of the Quraysh and Yathrib and those who followed them and joined them and labored (fought) with them.

2. They are one community (Ummah) to the exclusion of all other people.

3. The muhajjirun of the Quraysh, according to their present custom, shall pay the blood-money within their own number and shall redeem their prisoners with the kindness and justice common among believers (*ma'ruf*).

4. The Banu Auf, according to their present custom, shall pay the blood money they paid in times of ignorance; every section shall redeem its prisoners with the kindness and justice common among believers.

5-8. The Banu Sa'idah, the Banu Harithah, the Banu Jusham and the Banu Najjar likewise.

9-11.The Banu Amr bin Auf, the Banu al-Nabit and the Banu al-Aus likewise.

12. Believers shall not leave anyone destitute among them by not paying his redemption money or blood money in kindness.

13. A believer shall not take away the freedom of another Muslim against his will.

14. The God-fearing believers shall be against the rebellious or him who seeks to spread injustice, or sin or enmity, or corruption between believers; the hand of

every man shall be against him even if he be a son of one of them.

15. A believer shall not slay a believer for the sake of an unbeliever nor shall he aid an unbeliever against a believer.

16. Allah's protection (*dhimmah*) is one; the least (adna) of them may give protection to a stranger on their behalf. The believers are friends (mawali) one to the other to the exclusion of other people.

17. To the Jew who follows us belong help and equality. He shall not be wronged nor shall his enemies be aided.

18. The peace of the believers is indivisible. No separate peace shall be made when believers are fighting in the Way of Allah.

19. Conditions must be fair and equitable to all (in all peace treaties).

20. In every party, a rider must take another behind him (while doing military duties).

21. The believers must avenge the blood of one another shed in the Way of Allah. The God-fearing believers enjoy the best and most upright guidance.

22. No polytheist shall take the property or person of a Quraysh under his protection nor shall he intervene against a believer.

23. Whoever is convicted of killing a believer without just cause shall be subject to retaliation, unless the next of kin

is satisfied (with blood-money), and the believers shall be against him as one man, and they are bound to take action against him.

24. It shall not be lawful for a believer who has agreed to what is in this document and believes in Allah and the Last Day to help an evil-doer or to shelter him. The curse of Allah and His Anger on the Day of Resurrection will be upon him if he does, and neither repentance nor ransom will be accepted from him.

25. Whenever there is a difference of opinion about anything, it must be referred to Allah and Muhammed for a final decision.

26. The Jews shall contribute to the cost of war as long as they are fighting alongside the believers.

27. The Jews of the Banu Auf are one community with the believers (the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs'), their freedmen and their persons except those who behave unjustly or sinfully, for they hurt but themselves and their families.

28-35. The same applies to the Jews of the Banu al-Najjar, Banu al-Harith, Banu Sa'idah, Banu Jusham, Banu al-Aus, Banu Thalabah and the Jafnah, a clan of the Thalabah and the Banu al-Shutaibah.

36. Loyalty is a protection against treachery. The freedmen of Thalabah are as themselves. The close friends of the Jews are as themselves.

37. None of (the believers)? shall go to war, except with the permission of Muhammed, but he shall not be prevented from taking revenge for a wound.

38. He who slays a man without warning slays himself and his household, unless it be one who has wronged him, for Allah will accept that.

39. The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses.

40. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document.

41. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery.

42. A man is not liable for his ally's misdeeds.

43. The wronged must be helped.

44. The Jews must bear expenses along with the believers so long as war lasts.

45. The valley of Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document.

46. A stranger under protection (jar) shall be as his host so long as he does no harm and commits no crime. A woman shall only be given protection with the consent of her family.

47. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise it must be referred to Allah and to Muhammed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Allah accepts what is nearest to piety and goodness in this document.

48. Quraysh and their helpers shall not be given protection,

49. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib.

50. If they are called to make peace and maintain it, they must do so; and if they make a similar demand on the Muslims, it must be carried out, except in the case of the Jihad.

51. Everyone shall have his portion from the side to which he belongs; the Jews of al Aus, their freedmen and themselves have the same standing with the people of this document in pure loyalty from the people of this document. Loyalty is a protection against treachery. He who acquires anything acquires it for himself.

52. Allah approves of this document. This deed will not protect the unjust and the sinner. The man who goes forth to fight or the man who stays at home in the city is safe unless he has been unjust and a sinner. Allah is the Protector of the good and the Cod-man and Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

This was a historic document, which brought revolutionary changes in the body politic of the City of Medinah and gave it a new status. The main achievements of the document are summarized below.

1. It gave definite rights and duties to the participants in the document. The Muslims (the Ansaar and the Muhaajirun) and the Jews and their allies and helpers were all given these rights equally. Thus it was truly a Charter of Rights and Duties of the people of Medinah and the surrounding areas.

2. It established the authority of the central government of Medinah over Medinah and the surrounding areas.

3. Muhammed was now recognised as the undisputed ruler and leader of the people, including the Jews. He was established as the head of the legislative, executive and judicial powers and the final authority in all matters.

4. The Jews not only accepted Muhammed (ﷺ) as sovereign but also recognised Medinah as a sanctuary (a sacred city) like Makkah. They also accepted him as the final authority in all judicial matters and his decisions were to be accepted by all.

5. This document introduced a novel idea into politics. It brought morality into politics against all material and secular attitudes. Allah was recognized as the source of all Authority and Law and Muhammed was recognised as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and as His agent.

6. It established the rule of law in the country. One law was applied to all, irrespective of caste, creed, color or race, and even Muhammed himself was not excluded. And interference with law in any form was strictly forbidden. Muslims and Jews and others were treated in

the same manner before the law and no distinction was made in such matters.

7. Another revolutionary step was the establishment of one community (*Ummah*) out of the heterogeneous nature and structure of the multiracial society. The Muslims, the Jews and their allies were knit together into one community with one authority and one law for all as against the rest of the world. Thus the idea of oneness infused a spirit of unity and solidarity among the peoples of Medinah and made them one solid cemented structure against their enemies.

8. It also established Muhammed as commander of the allied forces in case of war.

9. It gave everybody equality and freedom of action and joined them together in the ties of human brotherhood. Thus it brought them all onto an equal level: the *Ansaar* and the *Muhaajirun*, the Jews and their allies and helpers were now politically and culturally equal.

10. It also made the matter of war and peace the exclusive concern of the central authority of Medinah. In other words, Muhammed was given the absolute right and power to declare war against, or make peace with, any tribe or power. The Jews and others had no right or power to independently declare war against, or make peace with, any outside power.

11. Military service was made compulsory and every citizen was required to take part in it.

12. It also made it obligatory for all Muslims and Jews to help one another in war and peace as well as in adversity and plenty.

13. In all judicial matters, the decision of the Prophet (ﷺ) was final.

14. The right of seeking revenge was transferred from individuals to the central authority. The individual could no longer take the law into his own hands, and had to go to the central authority.

15. It clearly forbade all participants in this document to give any kind of help or protection to the Quraysh of Makkah. The Jews did not honor this clause of the document.

TREATY WITH QURAISH

(Truce of Hudaibiyah)

Then, in the sixth year of the Hijrah, the peace of Hudaibiyah was signed between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Quraysh on the following terms.

1. They agreed to suspend war for ten years during which time people will keep the peace and will not obstruct others. The Quraysh will not wage war against the Muslims nor help others against them, but will remain neutral in case of Muslims fighting a third party.

2. There will be no secret stealing and misappropriation.

3. Whoever wants to enter into a pact with Muhammed (ﷺ) and conclude a treaty with him can do so. And whoever wants to enter into a pact with the Quraysh and conclude a treaty with them can do so.

4. Whoever comes to Muhammed (ﷺ) without permission of his guardian will be returned and whoever comes to the Quraysh from the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) will not be returned.

5. Muhammed (ﷺ) will go back this year with his companions and will enter the Ka'bah next year with his companions. He will stay there for three days and he will not enter with arms except the arms carried by travelers—swords in sheaths.

There is not a single example where Muhammed (ﷺ) made a treaty and then broke it. He made treaties to establish peace in the country, for his main aim was peace. It was Quraysh who first forced him to leave his hometown and then began war preparations against him.

Likewise, he was the one who took the initiative in forming a confederation between the Jews and the Ansar against foreign invaders in order to insure peaceful existence between all the people in the city. The Jews were the first to break the terms of the agreement. And then, when Muhammed (ﷺ) reminded them of their mutual obligations they insulted him and behaved insolently.

Another thing to remember in such agreements is that when the other party proves treacherous (8:58) or violates the terms of the agreement (9:7-8), then it must be openly thrown back to them and made clear to them that there is no longer a state of peace. According to the verse, if you want to break a treaty for the reasons mentioned above, then you must "throw their treaty openly before them." It is thus "unlawful to make a unilateral decision to terminate an agreement, even if the Muslims feel that the other party is not observing the terms strictly and properly, or if they are afraid that the other party will turn treacherous at the first opportunity." Therefore it forbids them to treat the other party in a way that implies that there has been no treaty with them at all. On the other hand, this verse binds the Muslims to inform the other party in clear words, before taking any steps against it, that the treaty with it has been terminated. This is

essential, so that the other party should have no misunderstanding whatsoever that the treaty is still in force.

The Prophet (ﷺ) based the international policy of Islam on this verse. He decreed, He who has made a treaty with another party is bound by it until the expiry of its term. Or, if obliged to because of a breach by the other party, he should throw it before the other party, so that both may be set on an equal footing. Then he extended the same principle to all other matters, saying, "Behave not treacherously, even towards those who are treacherous to you." And he impressed this principle so deeply on their minds that it was observed most strictly, both in spirit and in letter."

There is, however, an exception to the above principle. When the enemy has actually violated the treaty openly in such a flagrant manner that the treaty is understood to have been abrogated and cancelled, in such circumstances, there is no need to throw their treaty openly before them, because the other party, by violating its terms, has clearly shown that the treaty is no longer binding unless it is re-negotiated. It may, however, be pointed out that the violation of the treaty on the part of the enemy must be open and glaring, about which there should be no doubt in the minds of the other party.

Muhammed (ﷺ) observed this principle very strictly in all his agreements. In the case of the Jews of Medinah, he went himself or sent someone to remind them of their

mutual obligations and to confirm their position regarding the agreement. He did this every time they violated the terms of their agreement.

When the other party showed openly by their action that they did not care for him or for his agreements, only then was action taken against them.

There is only one case where the exception to this was employed. It was in the case of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah with the Quraysh. They had openly broken the terms of it by attacking and killing mercilessly men of the Banu Khuza'ah, who were allies of the Muslims, in the Ka'bah. Muhammed (ﷺ), therefore, felt no need to give them any notice of abrogation before attacking them. The following circumstances regarding the Quraysh action in violating the pact justified Muhammed's retaliatory action against them.

First, the violation of the treaty by Quraysh was so glaring that there was absolutely no doubt that there had been a breach and they themselves confessed that the treaty had come to an end. That is why they sent Abu Sufyan to al-Medinah to renew it. Though that was a proof that they knew the treaty had come to an end, it does not imply that an exception to the principle is justifiable only if those who violate the treaty know it and confess it. The exception is justifiable if the violation is quite clear to everybody and beyond doubt.

Second, after the violation of the treaty, the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) did not indicate in any way whatever by word or by

deed or by implication that in spite of the violation of the treaty by them he regarded the treaty to be still in force; nor did he continue such relations with them as might indicate the same. All the traditions show that he rejected the offer of renewal of the treaty made by Abu Sufyan.

Third, he openly took military action against the Quraysh and did nothing at all to show an outward display of peace, while harboring secret intentions of war."

Thus the Prophet set an example by his own action that all treaties are to be observed and respected until violated by the enemy. In that case, it is for the Muslim State to negotiate a new treaty, or take other necessary steps according to the nature of the situation. Thus this verse also outlines the general principles which govern foreign policy in the Islamic state.